

Socialist Fight

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Greece: Trotskyist class politics not anti-austerity Popular Frontism



The Libyan 'revolution', "... Lenin warned against prematurely confronting respected native institutions, even when these clearly violated communist principles and Soviet law. Instead he proposed to use the Soviet state power to systematically undermine them while simultaneously demonstrating the superiority of Soviet institutions, a policy which had worked well against the powerful Russian Orthodox Church."

Dale Ross (D. L. Reissner), 'Women and Revolution', 'Early Bolshevik Work among Women of the Soviet East' (Issue No. 12 Summer 1976).

"... the connection between imperial politics and culture is astonishingly direct. American attitudes to American "greatness", to hierarchies of race, to the perils of "other" revolutions (the American revolution being considered unique and somehow unrepeatable anywhere else in the world) have remained constant, have dictated, have obscured, the realities of empire, while apologists for overseas American interests have insisted on American innocence, doing good, fighting for freedom."

Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, speech at York University, Toronto, February 10, 1993.

Contents

- Page 2: Editorial: Greece: Trotskyist class politics not anti-austerity Popular Frontism.
- Page 3: GRL Motion of Support to Construction R+F.
- Page 4: Diversion: Stuff the £500 Olympics bonus; Where We Stand – Socialist Fight EB.
- Page 5: Motion to the GRL NC on 12 May on the Labour party and Labour Representation Committee.
- Page 6: Leitrim woman is honoured by NICRA co-founder as the 'prisoners' friend' IRPSG report.
- Page 7: Support Republican Prisoners - Join the Protests!
- Page 8: The framing of Michael McKevitt - Part two By Michael Holden.
- Page 9: Fascists attack Irish March By Charlie Walsh.
- Page 10: Today, 14 May, is Thaeir Halahleh's 77th day on hunger strike.
- Page 11: May Day Greetings from the LCFI to the International Working Class.
- Page 12: The Malvinas: the imperialist offensive in the South Atlantic By the LCFI.
- Page 14: Cultural Imperialism; Ireland, Workers Power and the Sparts By Gerry Downing.
- Page 17: David North's SEP; a backward, workerist/reductionalist political current By Tony Fox.
- Page 19: Tariq Mehanha's powerful sentencing statement
- Page 21: Letters page; French elections.
- Page 22: Bolshevism vs. SWP: To lead the working class or follow the TU bureaucracy By Ret Marut
- Page 24: Mumia's Death Sentence officially dropped By Ailish Dease, The Angola 3.
- Page 25: The Greek Elections By Savas Michael-Matsas, Comment on this By Socialist Fight.
- Page 26: Free Salameh Kaileh and all socialist militants.
- Page 27: Burma: Imperialism's plaything By Ailish Dease.
- Page 29: The Imperialist infantilisation of Afghan, Asian and African women.
- Page 31: Obituaries, Dave Spencer, Gerry Foley, Ron Spurway.
- Page 32: How Des Warren, and only Des Warren, wrote The key to my cell By Chris Corrigan.

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Signed articles do not necessarily represent the views of the SF EB.

Unity is strength, L'union fait la force, Es la unidad fuerza, Η ενότητα είναι δύναμη, اتحاد قوت است, đoàn kết là sức mạnh, Jedność jest siła, ykseys on kesto, யুনিটি শক্তি, Midnimo iyo waa awood, hundeb ydy chryfder, Einheit ist Stärke, एकता शक्ति है, единство наша сила, vienybės jėga, bashkimi ben fuqine, אחדות היא כוח, unità è la resistenza, 団結は力だ, A unidade é a força, eining er styrkur, De eenheid is de sterkte, الوحدة هو القوة, Ní neart go chur le céile, pagkakaisa ay kalakasan, jednota je síla, 일성은이다 힘, Workers of the World Unite!

Greece: Trotskyist class politics not anti-austerity Popular Frontism

Editorial

The election results from Britain (3 May), France, Greece and Germany this summer, shows a generalised collapse in support for the direct parties of the ruling class and a swing to the left in the working class and oppressed - where they chose to vote at all. But there is no real progress in the central question of the hour, that of the revolutionary leadership of the working class to seriously address the economic crisis of capitalism and forwards to the political wresting of power. In Britain the swing to the Labour party was significant in recent local government elections (Boris Johnson's mayoral election in London aside). Labour now has a 39% to 31% lead over the Tories in the polls. In Germany the results from Schleswig-Holstein and North Rhine-Westphalia are a significant setback for Merkel's conservative CDU party. The SPD has significantly increased its vote and the vote of the Free Democrats (Merkel's partners in federal government) has collapsed as has that of Die Linke.

In France and Britain we must insist that imperialist wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya with interventionist Imperialist wars looming against Syria and Iran (and Britain's posturing in the south Atlantic) do affect political outlooks and voting. Crucially support for these adventures ties the far left groups to the trade union bureaucracies and thereby to their own Imperialist bourgeoisies. So social patriotism has shown most of the far left groups to be rotten at the core, as WWI exposed the German SPD through to the British Labour Party - and their apologists.

The electoral radical reformist New Anti Capitalist party (NPA) in France has gone the same way as the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) in Britain and Die Linke in Germany. The voters do not see them as any type of potential opponents to capitalism itself. It was the posturing of Mélenchon who rallied the radical French voters by directly opposing the worst aspects of the capitalist crisis and the Front National of Marine Le Pen. However the PCF (Parti Communiste Français) mayor of Vitry ordered the bulldozing of an immigrant (Mali) hostel 1981, with the full support of Communist Party leader Georges Marchais, in seeking to outdo the FN on a racist basis and win back votes in the Red Belt around Paris. Some allies in the *Front de Gauche*!

If Germany, Britain and France shows a left-moving working class preparing itself physiologically for the fight, the Greek election results from 6 May show us the results of two years of street, industrial, political and ideological struggles - and all our futures. Synaspismos (SYN), the largest leftist group in the electoral alliance called SYRIZA - is ideological formlessness. SYN is an electoral alliance of various Stalinist, ecological, bourgeois and radical social democrats. In order to launch SYRIZA the process of ideological dilution of the class struggle had to be further diluted to include even more bourgeois elements. It is a popular Front-type alliance; anti-EU/Euro propaganda barely

masks powerful Greek nationalist sentiments in SYRIZA as in the Communist KKE. The contrast between SYRIZA and the Bolshevik-type party of Lenin could not be greater.

"The world political situation as a whole is chiefly characterized by a historical crisis of the leadership of the proletariat", is Trotsky's opening sentence of the Transitional programme of 1938 and it still applies with all its force today. In Greece the problem is the existing leadership of the working class and the role they play in defence of capitalism. We must put forward a United Front policy of intervening in the divisions that is opening up between the ranks and the leaders of the main trade union federations and their political representatives in parliament. It is by tackling this crisis that we can forge the revolutionary leadership that is needed. As Trotsky said at the end of the first section of the TP, *"The turn is now to the proletariat, i.e., chiefly to its revolutionary vanguard. The historical crisis of mankind is reduced to the crisis of the revolutionary leadership."*

In Greece this means examining how we can expose, defeat and replace with more militant and revolutionary fighters the leadership of PASKE, the labour movement faction linked to PASOK, ESAK/PAME linked to the KKE (the Communist party) and Autonomous Intervention, linked to the SYN, the leading force in SYRIZA. The latter was in second place with 16.7% per cent up from 4.6% per cent in 2009. Trotskyist class politics and NOT simply anti-austerity Popular Frontism - is at a premium now. Every serious contestant in this class struggle knows this. For example Tassos Anastasiadis, Andreas Sartzekis, of OKDE-Spartakos, Greek section of the FI in the Antarsya alliance, recently wrote: *"... indeed, whereas the leaderships of GSEE (the confederation of private sector workers) and ADEDY (the federation of public sector workers), in both of which PASOK is in the majority, have every reason not to mobilize against "their" government, they had no choice but to give in to the pressure exerted since December by the trade-union left."*

PASOK's vote collapsed from 43.9% in 2009 to 13.18%, within three economically bruising years. But that does not mean the end of PASOK because it does not mean the end of their trade union federation PASKE. The PASKE leadership have tacked far to the left whilst continuing to support austerity. Given the drubbing PASOK got surely the leadership of Evangelos Venizelos must come under attack, particularly if they get a second set of disastrous election results in the recalled elections in June. A figure may emerge there or from the militant-sounding GSEE or ADEDY leaders to assume the role of fiery revolutionist along the lines of the French Mélenchon or the Spanish Civil War PSOE leader Largo Caballero. And such a figure would have enormous advantages over Alexis Tsipras of SYRIZA, the current aspirant to that role. PASOK is a unified national party with that crucial TU federation in tow, far more implanted in the working class than Autonomous Intervention, the trade union federation of SYN. Those who write off the counter-revolutionary role

that PASOK leaders via the PASKE federation and in their own right will not lead the Greek working class in revolution.

The other TU federation which has to be taken very seriously is ESAK/PAME, the TU federation linked to the KKE. To hide their defence of the capitalist system (they "don't support the idea of world revolution like 'Trotsky, Pablo, Castoriadis or Marcuse'!") they adopt an ultra leftist Third Period Stalinism, denouncing all other leftists and refusing to participating in joint demonstrations and strikes with the PASKE. This has resulted in internal frictions and expulsions, particularly amongst its student leaders where their vote has also fallen. In the general election they increased their vote by only 0.9% to 8.48%. They had previously attacked the PASKE from the right, as in the five day school teachers' strikes in 2006, and were widely viewed then as strike-breakers. Their obvious insincere leftism has failed to win the masses. Nevertheless they have a powerful implantation in the trade unions, particularly the urban industrial workers. So has their youth movement, the Communist Youth of Greece (KNE). Here the United Front tactic is necessary, fighting to build a rank and file movement in the union and exploring whether entry is possible (and safe) in the KNE.

DIMAR, a rightward split from SYRIZA, of euro-communist origins, gained 6.11%. The fascist Golden Dawn got a dangerous 6.9% showing the sharp class polarisation in Greece.

The Front of the Greek Anticapitalist Left, Antarsya, comprises ten far left groups. It contains organisations from ex-Communist Party (KKE) to Maoism and Trotskyism. The Workers Revolutionary party (EEK) is not a member. What then of the prospects for revolutionary leadership in Greece? Workers Power Dave Stockton correctly attacks Antarsya's programme thus:

"Antarsya's programme was a terrible muddle. It did not even address the fact that the reformist parties - SYRIZA, KKE, and DIMAR - plus the trade unions, represent the overwhelming mass of the working class and that the working class rejects austerity and is seeking a way out of it via these parties"

That is fair enough but he implicitly endorses the Popular Frontist nationalist class nature of SYRIZA and anti-austerity and does not go on to outline a United Front policy to fight for the class independence of the whole working class. He ignores PASOK/PASKE and the workers they continue to represent and therefore the WHOLE working class with all its contradictions. As in their anti-capitalist projects in Britain the big ranks of the working class and their reformist illusions in bourgeois-workers parties do not get a mention, despite programmatic commitments. As with Libya and the Anti-Imperialist United Front surely it is time for WP to renounce the characterisation of the Labour party as a bourgeois workers party and the United Front tactic in relation to it. If not we can again justly accuse them of having another policy in theory that is simply inapplicable in practice.

Leon Trotsky: I am confident of the victory of the Fourth International; Go Forward!



GRL Motion of Support to UC R+F

This National Committee meeting of the Grass Roots Left sends its warmest congratulations to the Construction 'Rank and File' who won the BESNA battle. We are delighted that this grass roots mobilisation has defeated this first phase of the employers attack and are pleased to note that the electricians are preparing for the second stage of the battle.

In particular we note the very powerful sentiments expressed against the agency employers and that "a priority must be given to rooting them [agencies] out of our industry", "Agencies are the scourge of the industry, exploiting workers, these agencies pay under the rate, no holiday pay, no sick pay and they fire us at will." and "Let's send the message out loud and clear 'No agencies wanted' 'Direct employment only!'.

London cleaners is an allied struggle and an inspiration to the building workers, as they operate in a trade that is also notoriously difficult to organise and requires the most militant of tactics and the sharpest of struggles against the TU bureaucracies, ever anxious to cut a deal with employers which gives them members subs but sells out the rights and conditions of the workers.

These sentiments, of course, apply not only to the sparks and allied trades but also to all trades and to the building labourers in the building sites. This gives the Sparks, on the back an all too rare industrial victory, a unique opportunity to take up the fight begun by Des Warren and the building worker strikers in 1972. In that regard the struggle against the Blacklist and the struggle for Justice for the Shrewsbury pickets is inseparable from the struggle to organise the sites today.

It has to involve the sharpest struggle against the trade union bureaucracy in Unite, UCATT, the

GMB and others whose practice of imposing convenors in collaboration with the construction companies, as in the Olympics sites, has led to such terrible results.

For this reason we give out full support to Mick Dooley in his struggle against the UCATT bureaucracy and the disgraceful action in expelling his from the union to prevent him winning the General Secretary's election. The failure to organise the Olympics sites properly is the sharpest of warnings to us all that the time for a proper rank and file movement covering all the sites trades and labourers is long overdue. Direct employment must be at the heart of that struggle, as it was in 1972.

Grass Roots Left is proud that it and its Chair, Jerry Hicks, was able to assist in building this movement to this point and we look forward to yet closer collaboration between our two rank and file movements in the future.

Passed unanimously at GRL NC 31st March 2012

Letter from Brian Higgins

Hi Gerry,

In last email I said I would get back in more detail to you about R&F organisation and programme etc in construction. Now Easter break is over, here I am.

The motion of support and congrats the GRL National Committee sent to R&F in construction was an impressive document. It was also a timely one as it puts the lot of other site workers in the building industry outside the JIB on the agenda of Unite R&F and how the sparks' and others tremendous struggle and victory can benefit all trades and occupations in construction.

You'll notice in pamphlet on BWG there's quite a mention given to the Jubilee Line and how the sparks and their R&F organisation ran employers and FTOs ragged with successful dispute after dispute. And where the [political] sectional limitations put on this by the SWP who had quite a bit of influence with site sparks at that time is also mentioned. Who because of their Broad Left approach were terrified of upsetting [left] FTOs, even after hammering FTOs with independent R&F organisation!, by advocating the need to widen and generalise the Jubilee Line R&F experience by involving much more numerical trades and occupations outside the JIB and building a R&F organisation and movement, with programme, which would benefit all site workers and their wages and working conditions, some immeasurably! This would be anathema to all FTO, left, right and centre! Would render them redundant apart from anything else!

Fortunately the SWP BL influence has waned considerably since then and even if they still had this the sheer R&F anger, determination and level of organisation unleashed by the attack on the JIB and attempt to impose BESNA would've swept the SWP aside as it did the dithering offi-

cials in this R&F tide. And the question would still be how do we take this into the rest of the workers in the industry from here?

The sparks always maintained, as Site Worker also did, and publicly declared they were very conscious they were fighting for the interests of all site workers. In that if the bosses could ignore the JIB and impose BESNA, and the massive wage cuts therein, on and beat the best organised and most militant group of workers in the industry then they'd come for the rest after this. Sparks and other JIB trades have held the R&F line. But of course bosses will come back for them and other much more numerical trades and occupations. This [class] war, this struggle goes on, and the only way to succeed against whatever they have planned is for sparks and others, to use their struggle and victory and the credibility this gives them, to call for one big united front R&F organisation and movement for all trades and occupations in construction, with a R&F programme and policies with which to do this.

The next thing is what this programme and these policies should be. Read Site Worker - only joking! Understandably direct employment, along with blacklisting, is the main concern for sparks and other JIB trades. But the key to the success of any general programme for all site workers is what some workers might consider key for their trades or occupations might not have the same priority for others, although of course a R&F programme is about building consciousness on all major issues for workers in the industry which all can and will unite and fight for and around. One particular issue might dominate as opposed to others from time to time, e.g., many general and semi skilled, especially migrant, workers in construction are on or just above or even below the minimum national wage!

So their main demand and hope, would be for a MASSIVE basic wage rise. So an actual, huge



Brian Higgins, Sec of Northampton UCATT, (second from left) with a delegation of trade unionists from the Blacklist Support Group in Brussels with László Andor, European Union Commissioner with responsibility for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion to discuss potential EU wide legislation to outlaw blacklisting.

rise!, in the basic wage rate demanded by a R&F organisation, would resonate massively with the lower paid in construction. And of course it must also mean it will be a substantial increase, and worth fighting for those with better hourly rates! A R&F programme must have something in it for all trades and occupations in which they will think it worthwhile uniting and fighting around and there's something in it for them. Demand to stop the killing and maiming will also unite all site workers Then of course there's ELECTION OF ALL OFFICIALS IN THE UNION AND ON SITE and total end to APPOINTMENT SYSTEM!!

And I think the ultimate objective, long way off at present of course, but we must think long - as well as short term!, must be the ultimate of unifying policies. One Movement - One Agreement - One Big Fighting Democratic Industrial Union for all site workers.[but which union or a new union????]. That's for the future!

Hope this is enough to be going on with Gerry. All the best.

* <http://solidaritymagazine.org/2011/07/blacklisting-of-trades-unionists-%E2%80%9C9Ccampaigning-northampton-grandfather-wins-major-breakthrough-in-europe%E2%80%9D/>

Diversion: Stuff the £500 Olympics bonus; the temporary contracts for all new starters are a far more serious threat to all drivers!

For more than a year now the Unite leadership for London Buses, Peter Kavanagh, Unite Regional Secretary and Steve O'Rourke, Chair of RISC and the London Convenor's Advisory committee, and Convenor in Metroline, in collusion with all the Convenors, have allowed the bus companies to impose temporary contracts on all new starters which abandon all the gains won back since the last disaster, the wage cutting and privatisation of 1993-4.

They have made no peep of opposition whilst this "race to the bottom" has accelerated, they have organised no meetings to oppose this and pathetically they have tried to keep the drivers from finding out about what is going on.

For instance Metroline lost the 266 route to FirstGroup because First pay £9.50 an hour to new starters. Metroline imposed 2 year temporary contracts from 1st January 2012 without consultation with Unite, ignoring the collective bargaining agreement. No sick pay, no weekend enhancements, are just some of the rumoured clauses. Six weeks later drivers at Cricklewood were eventually told what had happened. **Unite incredibly accepted their own derecognition over new drivers' contracts; this is one of the biggest retreats of any union in recent times.**

To avoid a fightback Unite organised a London-wide consultative ballot on 13th March to threaten strike action over a far less important issue; a £500 payment for all drivers in London

because of the extra work involved in ferrying punters to the Olympics.

The attitude was "f*** the new drivers, look after yourself". But there will be 200 surplus drivers in Metroline alone by the end of the Olympics; every driver knows that they will want to sack the £12 + an hour drivers and keep the £9.50 ones to win routes. **We all recognise a diversion when we encounter one en route.**

All the opposition to the "race to the bottom and for one wage rate and conditions is forgotten now as every Unite official seeks to help "his" bus company through its "financial difficulties" at the expense of the drivers!

Drivers across London have had to endure annual pay agreements over the last 3 years less than inflation - amounting to a pay decrease. Seeing as the Government has only imposed 6% of their total planned cuts in public spending announced, we can expect more attacks on drivers pay and conditions in the near future.

Unite have changed their rulebook. From June this year union reps can remain in post for a maximum of 3 years. Most reps will take this unless drivers at individual garage branches (which must meet monthly!) decide a fixed period of office of, say, 1 year.

This is a real threat to every bus driver in London. The extension of union reps' period in office will potentially worsen members' ability to defend their own interests; three years is far too long to

allow a rep in office when the whole workforce may have seen within six months that he or she was merely a company stooge.

How the GRL Fights

- GRL has campaigned for proper toilet and mess room facilities at Brent Cross and throughout London against the TfL officials who keep closing toilets for spurious reasons and who want to close them permanently; they treat drivers like dogs.

GRL will be standing candidates for office in Unite next June to replace those who have become company stooges and accepted these attacks.

- The Grass Roots Left has initiated a Bus Drivers for Ken for Mayor Campaign, we should fight for his election and put the demands below on him.

Contact us if you want to stand for union office on these demands:

1. One set of wages and conditions throughout London!
2. Annual elections of reps on the buses and in Unite in general!
3. Toilets at the start and end of all routes!
4. End competitive tendering!
5. Renationalise the buses and all public transport!

7/3/12

Where We Stand – Socialist Fight EB

1. We stand with Karl Marx: 'The emancipation of the working classes must be conquered by the working classes themselves. The struggle for the emancipation of the working class means not a struggle for class privileges and monopolies but for equal rights and duties and the abolition of all class rule' (The International Workingmen's Association 1864, General Rules).

2. The capitalist state consists, in the last analysis of ruling-class laws within a judicial system and detention centres overseen by the armed bodies of police/army who are under the direction and are controlled in acts of defence of capitalist property rights against the interests of the majority of civil society. The working class must overthrow the capitalist state and replace it with a workers' state based on democratic soviets/workers' councils to suppress the inevitable counter-revolution of private capitalist profit against planned production for the satisfaction of socialised human need.

3. We recognise the necessity for revolutionaries to carry out serious ideological and political struggle as direct participants in the trade unions (always) and in the mass reformist social democratic bourgeois workers' parties despite their pro-

capitalist leaderships when conditions are favourable. Because we see the trade union bureaucracy and their allies in the Labour party leadership as the most fundamental obstacle to the struggle for power of the working class, outside of the state forces and their direct agencies themselves, we must fight and defeat and replace them with a revolutionary leadership by mobilising the base against the pro-capitalist bureaucratic misleaders to open the way forward for the struggle for workers' power.

4. We are full in support of all mass mobilisations against the onslaught of this reactionary Con-Lib Dem coalition. However, whilst participating in this struggle we will oppose all policies which subordinate the working class to the political agenda of the petty-bourgeois reformist leaders of the Labour party and trade unions.

5. We recognise that class society, and capitalism as the last form of class society, is by its nature patriarchal. In that sense the oppression of women is different from all other forms of oppression and discrimination. Because this social oppression is inextricably tied to private property and its inheritance to achieve full sexual, social and economic freedom and equality for all we need to overthrow class society itself.

6. We fight racism and fascism. We support the right of people to fight back against racist and fascist attacks by any means necessary. Self-defence is no offence! We support 'No Platform' for all fascists but never call on the capitalist state to ban fascist marches or parties; these laws would inevitably primarily be used against workers' organisations, as history has shown.

7. We oppose all immigration controls. International finance capital roams the planet in search of profit and Imperialist governments disrupts the lives of workers and cause the collapse of whole nations with their direct intervention in the Balkans, Iraq and Afghanistan and their proxy wars in Somalia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, etc. Workers have the right to sell their labour internationally wherever they get the best price. Only union membership and pay rates can counter employers who seek to exploit immigrant workers as cheap labour to undermine the gains of past struggles.

Socialist Fight is in the Liaison Committee for the Fourth International with the Liga Comunista of Brazil and the Tendencia Militante Bolchevique of Argentina. It is produced by this Editorial Board:

Gerry Downing, Ray Rising, Charlie Walsh, Carol Foster, Ailish Dease and Aggie McCallum.

Motion to the GRL NC on 12 May on the Labour party and Labour Representation Committee

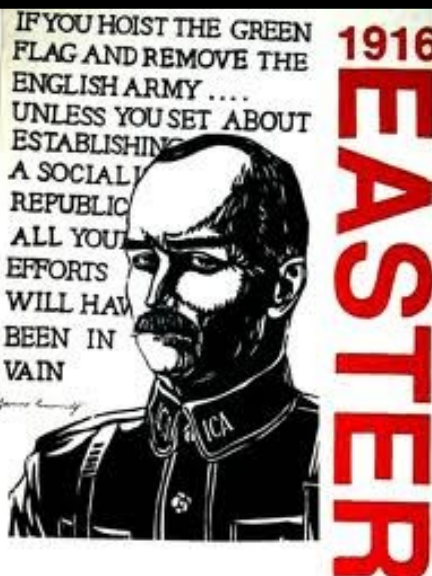
The following motion was drafted by Gerry Downing, Secretary of the GRL, for the May 2012 National Committee. After a brief discussion it was agreed to adopt point 8 of the motion, *That the GRL affiliates to the Labour Representations Committee and sends its full complement of delegates to the next AGM to fight for our policies there and to post the whole motion on the GRL website for discussion.*

In political terms the trade union bureaucracy and the Labour party leadership are closer now than ever before. Votes from the trade unions, Unite primarily, marshalled by the TU bureaucracy secured the leadership election for Ed Miliband against his brother David in September 2010. The Labour party is dependent on trade union financially now more than ever it was. According to the Bureau of Investigative Journalism's David Pegg, in September 30th, 2011, *Labour party funding on trade union life support*,

"Donations to Labour from individuals and companies have plummeted in the past year, leaving the party more reliant on union funding than at any other time in the past decade. Trade union funding now accounts for 91.3% of cash and non-cash donations to the party's central office, up from 59.9% last year, data released by the Electoral Commission shows. By contrast, donations from companies and individuals have fallen sharply since Ed Miliband came to power. Between July 2001 and June 2010, private donations accounted for between 31.5% and 43.1% of party cash. Since July 2010, that figure has nose-dived to 6.6%. The figures suggest that Ed Miliband's vow to loosen union influence over the Labour party by reducing their financial contributions has failed spectacularly. In fact, unions have solidified their hold over party finances." [1]

When Alan Johnson was leader of the Communication Workers Union and on the Labour NEC he was the only TU General Secretary to vote to abolish Clause 4 in 1995. He has a former 'Marxist' and members of the CPGB (according to the New Statesman) who was parachuted into parliament in a safe Labour seat just before the 1979 election by kicking the incumbent upstairs to the House of Lords. [2] He has played a vicious anti-working class role in all his ministerial positions and shadow portfolios.

Previous TU leaders who betrayed the working class include Ernest Bevin, General Secretary of the TGWU who served in WWII (appointed by Churchill as Minister for Labour and National Service when he was not even an MP). He served as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs from July to March 1951. He was a stout defender of the British ruling class and its foreign Imperial wars (Korea, Malaysia and Palestine) from a Tory perspective; *"Hasn't Anthony Eden grown fat?"* they used to say of him. [3]



James Connolly and Arthur Henderson. Henderson was in Lloyd George's War Cabinet which ordered the executions of the leaders of the 1916 uprising in Dublin and reportedly led the cheering in Parliament when it was announced that these were being carried out. Connolly was the last to be executed. It is difficult to see how the Labour party leadership has got qualitative worse since that time.

Likewise in WWI Arthur Henderson from the Iron Founders Union and leader of the Labour party became the first member of the Labour Party to hold a Cabinet post when Herbert Asquith invited him to join his coalition government in May 1915. Henderson was totally opposed to strikes even as a TU official and was in Lloyd George's War Cabinet which ordered the executions of the leaders of the 1916 uprising in Dublin and reportedly led the cheering in Parliament when it was announced that these were being carried out. James Connolly, the last to be executed, was a leader in the Second Socialist International with Henderson.

A rank and file movement must always seek to mobilise the base membership of the trade unions against the TU bureaucracy, standing more militant candidates who truly represent the will of the workers to fight. TU and Labour leaders are the obverse and reverse of the same coin of service to the British capitalist class and its Imperialists interests and wars abroad and betrayals of their working class followers at home. Therefore to fight the employers of the capitalist class effectively we must fight the TU bureaucracy and logically we must therefore fight the Labour party leaders both externally and internally wherever the opportunity arises and enough democratic space can be found. This means;

1. Democratising the Trade Unions so that a) all trade union officials are elected, b) all delegates to TU conferences are mandated following branch meetings, c) all block votes on major issues at the TUC and Labour party Conferences are decided in advance by the votes whole TU membership.

2. Affiliating branches to local Constituency Labour parties and sending delegates to serve on the Management Committees.

3. Opposing disaffiliation of Trade Unions nationally from the Labour Party.

4. Fighting to ensure that only those Labour party MPs and Councillors are funded who carry out Union policies.

5. Fighting to ensure that only national funding is given on the basis of a democratically decided plan of emergency public works and training schemes to give work to the unemployed.

6. That this is paid for by a steeply progressive Wealth Tax.

7. That restrictions are imposed immediately on capital transfers to prevent the rich moving their assets to tax havens abroad.

8. That the GRL affiliates to the Labour Representations Committee and sends its full complement of delegates to the next AGM to fight for our policies there.

Endnotes

[1] Bureau of Investigative Journalism, <http://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/2011/09/30/labour-party-funding-on-trade-union-life-support/>

[2] Wikipedia, NS profile: Alan Johnson". New Statesman. Retrieved 2006-08-20.

[3] Anthony Eden was the Tory Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in the wartime coalition under Churchill from December 1940 to July 1945, immediately preceding Bevin. Arthur Henderson had held the post from 1929 to 1931. Eden was later Prime Minister from April 1955 to January 1957, resigning as a consequence of the Suez crisis.

Leon Trotsky: I am confident of the victory of the Fourth International; Go Forward!

Leitrim woman is honoured by NICRA co-founder as the 'prisoners' friend'

A reception was held in the 'Edge of Town', Edgware, London, on Sunday, 1st April hosted by the Irish Republican Prisoners Support Group where tribute was paid to Mrs. Terry Gavin McWeeney (Terry Gavin, as she is known to her friends). Now an octogenarian, this life-long activist became well known in England and beyond for her efforts on behalf of political prisoners and their families.

During such humanitarian activity she became a close associate of Sister Sarah Clarke, who befriended Irish prisoners such as Giuseppe Conlon and his son, Frank Stagg, Michael Gaughan and many others, never visiting them empty-handed. She viewed as highly complementary, occasional monitoring of her actions by some of the British tabloids. The evening event was compered by Gerry Downing, secretary of the IRPSG, where IRPSG treasurer, Michael Holden, read out messages of support for Terry from Republican political prisoners on both sides of the border (see below), and chair, Cinead, who began by paying tribute to her life as a campaigner for Irish political prisoners since she came here as a young woman of 19 in 1950.

The large attendance was addressed by the Bogside-born author and historian, Fionnbarra O'Dochartaigh, who was a co-founder of the N. Ireland Civil Rights Association in Belfast, in 1967. After delivering his address, referring to Mrs. McWeeney as a "long-standing friend to all political prisoners, especially her fellow countrymen and women", he presented her with the recently produced 'Oak-leaf' civil rights flag, 1968 badges and Oct. 5th poster, a NICRA commemorative DVD, and the Bloody Sunday 40th anniversary single, "Vindicated", compiled by Derry song-writer, Tony O'Doherty.

Mr. O'Dochartaigh said although he was a socialist republican he viewed his presence at the event "as being founded on the principles of non-violent protest because full human rights and civil liberties are yet to be obtained in spite of very welcome yet highly belated major political reforms. However, those democratic ideals must also be extended to those incarcerated, especially in 'Her Majesty's Prison' at Maghaberry, Lisburn. It's about time the general public, and leading politicians in particular, woke up to the fact that their apathy or blinkered indifference is allowing history to repeat itself. As a result of the non-implementation of a supposedly 'solemn agreement', brokered in August 2010, political prisoners for many months have been engaged in a soul-destroying "dirty protest" in Maghaberry. We must all become more alerted, O'Dochartaigh said. Do we forget what the 1976 blanket-protest led to in '80 and '81? Yet again, the current prison authorities have reneged on a plan to replace,

what are acknowledged as degrading and brutal routine body searches, with electronic scanners known as a 'BOSS Chair' – 'Body Orifice Security Scanner'.

The Derry author, who dedicated his 2010 title, 'Ireland: England's Vietnam 1960s-1990s' - to the dead of Bloody Sunday and "all victims of the 'Long War', went on to point out "... that torture was still prevalent within the jails", citing the case of Brendan Lillis who could not receive visits despite being unable to move whilst confined to a sick bed for two years. This was due to an arthritic condition 'ankylosing spondylitis'. He commented: "Brendan was no threat to anyone. His eventual humanitarian release on licence is justly attributed to his partner Roisin Lynch's internet campaign, which alerted human rights groups thereby attracting a degree of sympathetic media coverage. It is rather sad, yet highly noteworthy, that almost single-handedly, her deep concern for a loved one, eventually secured the intervention of the Parole Commissioners".

O'Dochartaigh referred to other former prisoners such as Marian Price of Belfast and Martin Corey of Lurgan, whom he claimed, "... without warning, and without clearly stated reasons have again been incarcerated at 'Her Majesty's Pleasure' on the instructions of the current Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. This proconsul decided to revoke their licence, afforded to many others, primarily those now termed 'mainstream republicans', under the terms of the 1998 Good Friday/ Stormont Agreement. NIO officials insist that Marian Price's Royal Pardon has been lost or was accidentally shredded. This is difficult to accept, especially when the same Secretary of State seems aware of its contents when corresponding with human rights advocates such as the late Fr. Denis Faul's colleague, Monsignor Raymond Murray", he added.

The Derry speaker, also an ex-prisoner, issued 'a warning', remarking that in certain US circles it is known that Prime Minister David Cameron was endeavouring to re-negotiate the US/UK Extradition Treaty in the hope that Obama is not re-elected. He remarked, "no one group should campaign solely for one particular prisoner, but rather, NICRA-style, strive towards a unified and agreed non-violent campaign to highlight what is a return to internment under new guises such as being held for years on remand without sound evidence as in the case of Colin Duffy, and the withdrawal of licences at the behest of MI5, NIO and other London-controlled agencies, which is a covert form of political blackmail, he concluded.



Thanks are due Sean Houlihan of Republican Sinn Fein's Roger Casement/James Stephens Cumann, London, who sold so many tickets to his comrades for the event, to the landlord, Kilkenny man Phil Parsons, who provided a free buffet and many free drinks to the attendees and to the DJ who played all the rebel songs for the audience and especially to the group of musicians who rounded off the evening with the traditional 'session'. Prominent amongst these were Leeson O'Keefe of the band Neck (London-Irish Psycho Ceilidh) and west Cork accordion player Tricia Lynch (mother from Cape Clear island (Cléire) and father Bernie from Ballycrovane, near Eyeries on the Beara Peninsula, (which boasts the tallest ogham stone in the world!). It was a great evening.

Messages to Terry from Irish Republican Prisoners

"Hello Terry - congratulations are in order. I was happy to hear you are being honoured here tonight - and not before time! I as well as many others know only too well how you supported the republican prisoners down the years. In my case I can only say from the bottom of my heart a very big thank you, and I know I speak for many others as well. Do enjoy this event tonight. My partner Ellen joins me in wishing you a happy occasion. I will write soon."

Signed Noel Maguire

HMP Magilligan, County Derry, North of Ireland.

"Terry - congratulations and good wishes from all of us here on this, your special night. Michael told us about this event and nobody is more deserving than you to be given this honour for the work you have done on behalf of the republican prisoners in Ireland and England and the campaign for civil rights and social justice for more than 60 years. Our thanks to you, your work will not be forgotten. Terry enjoy this evening - we will be there in spirit."

Signed Michael McKeivitt, Anthony Deery, Tony Hyland, Tony Hanlon, Michael McDonald, Conan Murphy, Barney McKeivitt, Cormac Fitzpatrick, Niall Bennett, E-2 Wing, Portlaoise Prison, Ireland.

Support Republican Prisoners - Join the Protests!

32csm call for immediate release of Marian Price:

"The 32csm acknowledge that the decision to drop the politically motivated charges arising from the 2011 Easter commemoration against Marian Price, Patrick MacDauid, Marvin Canning and Frankie Quigley was the only logical outcome.

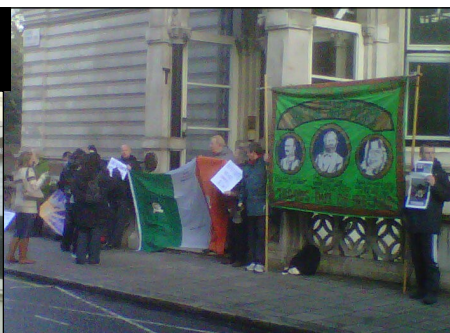
Spurious charges were brought against these 32CSM members in an attempt to intimidate all engaged in spreading the Republican political message. With the dropping of these charges it is becoming ever more clear that there is no legal or moral right for the British government to continue the internment of Marian Price. Marian

was released on bail on the original charges before being interned for unspecified "security reasons" on the word of a British secretary of state Owen Patterson. Marian was given a pardon upon her original release from jail and was not re-



leased on licence and therefore her imprisonment has no legitimate legal basis. The British government has claimed that they cannot find this pardon or have shredded it.

This blatant disregard for human rights and due process is an example of British justice in Ireland. We thank all those who have raised concerns and joined the campaign to call for Marian's immediate release. The eyes of the world are watching the six counties once again as the British government continues it's shameful legacy of internment and abuse of Republicans. We call on them to release Marian whose health has deteriorated to the point that she cannot even attend court. We will not stop our campaign until she is at home once again with her family."



The London-based Irish Republican Prisoners support group on the picket lines:

Clockwise: Terry Gavin at the picket of the Irish Embassy on 20 April, a wider view of the same 15-strong picket and the street rally of 20 in Kilburn Square on 2 May

List Of Irish Republican POWs

Posted on Republican.ie 04 September 2011 <http://republican.ie/forum/index.php?topic/79577-pow-list/>

Portlaoise Portlaoise Gaol Portlaoise County Laoise Ireland

Cogus Prisoners on E2

Michael McDonald [54] 28 years
Tony Hyland [38] 25 years
Michael McKeivitt [62] 20 years
Charles Anthony Deery [38] 10 years
Tarlach MacDomhnaill [27] 9 years
Cormac Fitzpatrick [25] 9 years
Gerard McGarrigle [42] 5 years
Gerard Carroll [21] 4 years

Darren Mooney [28] 3 years 6 months
Niall Farrell [34] Remand
Patrick Tierney [26] Remand
Patrick Gordon [22] Remand

Posted 13 September 2011 - 09:21 AM

Information effective and accurate as of 12 September, 2011. Irish Republican Socialist Prisoners of War

Name: County/City: Sentence/Release:

E4 Landing
Portlaoise Prison
Portlaoise, Co Laois
Ireland

Denis Dywer, Dublin 5 years
Eugene Kelly, Dundalk Paddy Wall, South Armagh 7 1/2 years
Thomas Kelly, Dublin 5 years
Neil Myles, Cork 4 1/2 years
Jonathan Keogh, Dublin 8 years
Noel Mooney, Dublin 8

years
Gareth Bryne , Dublin 4 years
Anthony Lee, Dundalk 5 years
John McCrossan, Strabane 4 1/2 years.
Posted 26 September 2011

E-3

Derek Brady
John Brock
Sean Connolly
Anthony Crowley
Bernard Dempsey
Aidan Hulme
Robert Hulme
Jim McCormick
Thomas Morris
Fintan Paul O'Farrell
Barry Petticrew
Declan John Rafferty

HMP Magilligan, County Derry, North of Ireland

Noel Maguire
Maghaberry Gaol
Roe 3, Old Road
Ballinderry Upper
Lisburn, Ireland
BT28 2PT

1. Brian Shivers - Magherafelt

2. Harry Fitzsimons - Belfast
3. Sean McConville - Lurgan
4. Damien McKenna - Lurgan
5. Gary Toman - Lurgan
6. Brendan McConville - Lurgan
7. John Paul Wootton - Craigavon
8. Kevin Barry Nolan - Co Cavan
9. Gerard McManus - Letterkenny
10. Willie Wong - Armagh
11. Tony Rooney - Belfast
12. Martin Corey - Lurgan
13. Joe Barr - Strabane
14. Jordan Whitehouse - Derry
15. Sean O'Reilly - Belfast
16. Robert O'Neill - Belfast
17. Martin McCloone - Derry
18. Mark McGuigan - Omagh
19. Phil O'Donnell - Derry
20. Gerry McGeough -

Co Tyrone
21. Francis Carleton - Belfast
22. Packy Carter - Co Tyrone
23. Michael Johnston - North Belfast
24. Dominic Dynes - Castleblayney,
25. Brian Cavan - Dungannon
26. Brian Sheridan - Blackwater Town
27. Raymond Whitehouse - Derry
28. Raymond Wootton - Belfast
29. Thomas Maguire - Belfast
30. Mark Kerr - Derry
31. Tony Taylor - Derry
32. Kevin Murphy - Coalisland
33. Kevin Vernon - Belfast
Posted 01 March 2012 - 11:01 AM
Special Supervision Unit - Isolation
Liam Campbell
Gavin Coyle
Hydebank Wood
Hospital Road

BELFAST BT8 8NA

Marian Price-McGlinchey

MAGILLIGAN PRISON Point Road Limvady Co. Derry BT 49 OLR

Liam Hannaway

The Grove Castlereaa Gaol Castlereaa, Co Roscommon Ireland

(IRSP) Eddie McGarrigle
Johnny McCrossan

Ecrou 293249 Div. 1 Cellule 217 Maison D'arret De la Sante 42 Rue De La Sante 75014

Paris, Cedex 14
France D1217

Kieron Doran

LUKISKES PRISON Lukiskiu bstr. 6 Vilnius, LT 01108 Lithuania

Michael Campbell

The framing of Michael McKevitt - part two

By Michael Holden (IRPSG)

"Reasonable people will read this account of what is happening to Michael McKevitt with a mixture of sadness and anger. People who value good legal systems and appreciate the courage of those who struggled to create them will read it with deep disappointment as well."

The treatment and trial of Michael McKevitt will outrage all of them.

Some of us who attended the Green Street Court in Dublin any time during the hearing of his trial will always remember the grip of cold fear we felt at how similar this trial was to what we had read about years ago - the show trials of the dictatorships."

So wrote Desmond Wilson, clergyman and human rights exponent in his foreword in the booklet *The Framing Of Michael McKevitt*. Wilson is not a republican, and what he wrote illustrates the anger and frustration felt by many honest ordinary people in Ireland at the time of the McKevitt trial.

There isn't any doubt whatsoever that Michael McKevitt was framed and is today a political hostage in the real sense of the word.

Prior to the McKevitt trial there was a campaign of vilification, slander and intimidation. The Irish media sadly were only too happy to join in that vilification. There was a relentless barrage of accusations accusing the family of involvement in the Omagh bomb tragedy – thereby putting their lives at risk! All visitors to their home in Dundalk were harassed by the Gardai (Irish police) who had taken up permanent residence outside their home. Even the local window-cleaner was stopped, thrown across the bonnet of a Gardai car and searched. Neighbours who approached the McKevitt home were warned they might be arrested 'as IRA sympathisers' - and so it went on. Even on Christmas Day the ERU (Emergency Response Unit) sat in a van outside their house with a loud hailer shouting obscenities.

From the outset there was an on-going stream of leaks through the Irish media prior to the McKevitt court case. Several such reports claimed Michael was video recorded meeting informer David Rupert.

These reports were completely false but it turned out later in court that no Gardai officer or journalist was ever threatened or charged with sub-judice prejudicial reporting.

Throughout the trial the (non-jury) Special Criminal Court was packed with FBI agents and members of the INSU (Irish National Security Unit) - and in addition - a backroom in the court was given over to MI5 for their exclusive use! Earlier Bernadette Sands-McKevitt had challenged the then Taoiseach (Prime Minister) Bertie Ahern about the presence of MI5 and CIA officers operating in Ireland. Ahern denied all knowledge of their presence! Yet there they were in a Dublin High Court after being wined and dined by their Gardai colleagues!

David Rupert took the stand and was cross-examined by the McKevitt defence. His responses were vague and very limited. He did however admit he had been coached and trained by MI5 prior to his arrival in Ireland and it became abundantly clear during the trial that he was directed, influenced and financed by MI5 and the American FBI. He admitted openly in court he was a career informant since the 1970s and financially motivated. The media ignored this. One would have thought that the blatant abuse of the rule of law would leave a considerable sense of unease amongst those who profess to value the 'independence' of the rule of law in Ireland - but in Michael McKevitt's case their silence was deafening - and still is!

No evidence was produced in court linking Michael McKevitt to Omagh - or to any other bomb. The 'hard evidence' espoused earlier by the media never materialised. It never existed. However a number of Gardai from the NSU (National Surveillance Unit) perjured themselves over and over again. They claimed for instance that they had observed Rupert, Michael McKevitt and others enter a house in a local authority housing estate in Oaklands Park. The purpose of their 'evidence' was to corroborate and give credence to Rupert's lies

However, and this is on record, each of the Gardai continually contradicted Rupert (and their own) evidence! Under cross-examination it was confirmed they did not make their original statements - which as a matter of interest were identical(!) - until a year after the alleged meeting took place - and over a month since Michael McKevitt's arrest! Another member of the NSU team stated had observed the "... comings and goings of Rupert and Michael McKevitt" - but it was shown his view was hidden by a wall and a tree - yet he claimed he could see clearly! He also admitted under cross-examination he wore no watch that night, had no pen and paper to record accurately! This coming from the (elite?) National Surveillance Unit who - according to them - had 'prior knowledge of the meeting taking place' - yet came unprepared! Furthermore the senior member of the NSU confirmed there was no photographic evidence because they didn't have a camera that could take photographs in the dark - another lie!

This man became visibly embarrassed when the McKevitt defence team produced copies of the same street - taken at night by a photographer employed by the Gardai and the NSU! Furthermore - and this is particularly relevant - the court also learned that the 'supposed' Oaklands Park observations were short and did not correspond with the elaborate detail described in the Gardai log-book - which in fact placed Michael McKevitt in the front-room of his own house - at the same time that David Rupert, stated categorically, he was meeting with him at an 'IRA Army Council' meeting!



Michael McKevitt is a political hostage framed by MI5 with the assistance of the FBI and senior members of the Irish Gardai. Michael was sentenced to 20 years and has been incarcerated in Portlaoise Prison for almost eight years now.

Rupert also claimed on oath he had been picked up at the McKevitt home that evening by Stephen McKevitt (Michael's son) but the Gardai surveillance report did not record Rupert anywhere near the McKevitt home that evening! In fact it logged Stephen McKevitt driving alone in a southern part of the county - at the time Rupert claimed Stephen had taken him to a house north of Dundalk! More contradictions, more lies! It was obvious to the court that as far as David Rupert was concerned there had been one blatant lie after another, and in the words of Rupert's handler Gardai Assistant Commissioner Dermot Jennings - 'Rupert is a bullshitter and a liar.' But was the court impressed? Of course not.

One major problem the McKevitt defence team faced was seeking disclosure. The court claimed it had no jurisdiction to compel agencies outside the state - MI5, FBI, CIA - to disclose any of their files! Yet the same court had no difficulty accepting evidence from a witness supplied by these very same agencies!

Simultaneously, it was conceded both 'foreign police agencies' had conspired with the Irish Gardai in framing an Irish citizen. Michael also requested full disclosure from the Irish authorities. One disclosure document he sought was the document that detailed who exactly was responsible for authorising the external agencies to operate within the Irish jurisdiction? This request was refused on the grounds 'of national security.'

But this was not on the grounds that no external agencies operated openly and clandestinely in Ireland in furtherance and defence of their own national interests! Non-disclosure of vital documents resulted in Michael's defence team being greatly disadvantaged and handicapped. They were met with obstacle after obstacle - with only ONE result likely to emerge.

Stephen McKevitt, who had been helping his father with his case, was arrested and all vital documents pertaining to his defence were

seized. Stephen was held for two days during which time he was offered inducements to give evidence against his own father! The trial had become a farce and a travesty of justice.

Michael dismissed his legal team. They had done their best but were not meant to win. He addressed the court detailing his reasons citing the proceedings as nothing other than a 'show trial.' He stated he was told by a senior Gardai officer at the time of his arrest, that the decision to frame him "... was a political one".

Dublin's (non-jury) Special Criminal Court, under the direction of Mr Justice Richard Johnston found Michael McKevitt guilty and sentenced him to twenty years imprisonment - principally on the evidence of David Rupert.

As for David Rupert. He was paid handsomely by the CIA and FBI. It is estimated his total take at around \$5 million - this consists of \$1.5 million from the FBI, plus a similar payment from MI5 - with a pension-plus of a reported \$50,000 per

month for life! All of those payments were dependent on the conviction of Michael McKevitt.

The case of Michael McKevitt will eventually go to the European Courts and when it does our European friends may well be shocked. We who are already shocked need not feel helpless. Michael McKevitt and his family need - and deserve - our help - and that help should be given for the sake of justice for all of us.

Further information can be had from the McKevitt website - www.michaelmckevitt.com

Fascists attack Irish March in Liverpool By Charlie Walsh

The Irish Post reported that on February 15th an Irish demonstration and rally in Liverpool was targeted by hundreds of far right fascists who spat on and racially abused those taking part. Participants in a Cairde na h-Éireann march were branded murdering scum as the fascists kept pace with the march.

Merseyside police had to form a defensive line of more than 150 marchers of Cairde na h-Éireann after the city centre event was branded and IRA march. The event was planned to commemorate Liverpool Republican Sean Phelan who was killed in the War of Independence in 1921. It was addressed by Cork East Sinn Féin TD Sandra McLellan. The march was met by huge hostility and those taking part were forced to turn back after the police voiced safety fears. The police allowed the fascist to disrupt the march and made no attempt to face them down or stop them. Estimates are that the fascists mobilised around 400 hundred to oppose the march. Two coaches which brought republican bands from Scotland had their windows smashed.

Sandra McLellan told The Irish Post, *"I never experienced anything like it in my life, a group of about 30 yobs were allowed to walk beside the parade for at least a mile, shouting words like scum and murderers and 'f*** off back to your own country.' I couldn't believe the hatred. It was continuous. It was horrendous."*

The Post reported:

"The Sinn Féin TD was critical of Merseyside Police who she said allowed a mob to walk beside the parade, hurling racial anti-Irish abuse and in some instances, spitting on participants. One participant, who wished to remain anonymous, said the parade was protected by a thin police line and that many people were left shaken by the abuse."

In a statement critical of the police Cairde na hÉireann said:

"It is a fact that groups such as the English Defence League, Infidels of Britain, and the British National Party lead a concerted campaign to increase tension surrounding this event by labelling it an IRA march. This vicious and appalling campaign of hate attracted the support of the Independent Orange Order, Loyalist groups and

more worryingly, various ex-British Armed Forces groups who all actively and jointly co-ordinated with each other to oppose this annual Irish community event. It is ironic that in 2011, during Queen Elizabeth II's visit to Ireland she was able to lay a wreath at the Garden of Remembrance in Dublin, which commemorates the men and women who died fighting for Irish Freedom, people like Volunteer Sean Phelan and yet despite this, this event was the subject of abuse, threats and intimidation."

Merseyside Police said they put an extensive policing plan in place to allow the march, organised by Liverpool Friends of Ireland, The James Larkin Society and Liverpool Irish and Republic flute band, to go ahead. But they added that as a result of the disorder in Leeds Street before the march the organisers agreed to the curtailment. Police reported one arrest during the operation, a 46-year-old man who was later released without charge.

As PostPadraig1916, on 20 February 2012, said:

I'm not surprised this is going on in Liverpool after reading this.

"Though Liverpool Antifascists cannot and will not condemn the use of force in self-defence, we are not looking to initiate violence. In fact, we hold that it is possible for the vast majority of physical resistance to be entirely peaceful. As our previous actions have demonstrated, it is entirely possible to block the fascists from view or to drive them off the streets altogether without throwing a single punch."

He replies,

.....It's about fighting fire with fire when it comes to these bastards.....they only know one language and blocking a fascist from view simply is not good enough. I can only imagine the scum gaining confidence from these statements. Look around Europe, the Antifa are chasing Nazis out of city centres and demoralising them, as we know sometimes the use of force is required in a situation. Liverpool was one of those situations.

"If only the anti fascists had the number and



Sandra McLellan TD and Gerry Adams in the 2011 election,
*"I never experienced anything like it in my life, a group of about 30 yobs were allowed to walk beside the parade for at least a mile, shouting words like scum and murderers and 'f*** off back to your own country.' I couldn't believe the hatred. It was continuous. It was horrendous."*

quality needed. In Liverpool on the day of the Republican march there were 250+ fascists out in the town and there were about a dozen Liverpool Antifa doing solidarity with the Occupy Liverpool anti police brutality protest. They were lucky only one Antifa member was hospitalised as they were so heavily outnumbered. I was at the Republican parade with a group of 20 socialist anti fascist activists. We had no possibility of taking on the fascists as the Republicans were happy just to get into their function. There were no other anti fascists in town and that's the problem- right now the fascists in England can mobilise hundreds and sometimes thousands while militant anti fascism [as opposed to UAF] can barely get into treble figures unless the Muslims and the EDL come out in a Muslim area. The defeats of the English working class and the demise of RA/AFA has resulted in us being very weak and requiring analysis and a rebuild, although that's easier said than done for serious antifascist activists."

See press release re: vol. Sean Phelan commemoration and comments.

<http://republican.ie/forum/index.php?/topic/84115-press-release-re-vol-sean-phelan-commemoration/>

So because the police could not or would not face down the fascists and stop them disrupting the march they allowed them to set the agenda

and call the shots. The sole fascist who was arrested was released without charge. What about incitement to racial hatred and threatening behaviour by the fascists towards those on the march? Surely the police must have heard enough anti-Irish racism and threats for the police to arrest them for this? And where were the UAF anti-fascist 'warriors'? It is amazing but in my experience I have never, ever known the UAF to support the Irish community against the fascists. In the same way I have never known the UAF to defend and/or support the Catholic working class in their struggles against Loyalist Orange marches going through their areas.

This is not the first time Irish political events have been attacked by fascists; on many occasions they attacked the Bloody Sunday march in London without any support and defence from the Anti-Nazi League or its successor the UAF. The Irish community must realise that the police will never adequately protect Irish political

demonstrations in Britain. Whether this is a deliberate policy or not I cannot say but going on what I have seen in the past the police bend over backwards to facilitate and accommodate and allow the fascists to peddle their filth and attack left wing and progressive marches and rallies. And it would appear that the UAF has no intention either of offering help and support to the Irish community and refuse to mobilise in defence of that community's right to march and rally and celebrate their cultural identity and history. Rather the Irish the Irish community will have to rely on themselves to protect their marches and turn to and appeal to the trade unions and other left and progressive forces in Britain to stand with and support in sufficient numbers and defend it against racist and fascist attacks.

Defend the democratic rights of the Irish community in Britain to march and rally wherever and with whomever to celebrate its political and

cultural heritage.

For a United Front against racism and fascism

The working class and trade unions in Britain must realise and understand that if the racists and fascists of the BNP, BPP, EDL et al succeed in driving the Irish and other ethnic minority communities off the streets it won't be long before they are emboldened to attack the working class itself and its organisations.

According to *The Guardian* on 19 November 2011,

"Nine days ago an EDL faction attempted to attack the north-west headquarters of Unite, the UK's biggest trade union. Online messages from the EDL in Merseyside stated they were 'patrolling for leftys [sic]'. Those they finally identified turned out to be former council workers protesting after they lost their jobs when a contractor went bust. A march of female asylum seekers has also been recently targeted by EDL supporters in the city."

Today, 14 May, is Thaer Halahleh's 77th day on hunger strike

Today is the day 77 of Thaer Halahleh's hunger strike and his status is very very critical, he was moved to Asaf Harofa hospital but the administration of the hospital refused to accept him and he was sent back to Ayyalon prison hospital.

On July 19 2010, Thaer became a father to baby Lamar but only got to meet her months later on October 9, the first visit allowed him since his last arrest and the only time his family were able to see him. Lamar is almost 2 years old now, and knows her father through pictures. She goes to sleep with a photo of her father tucked beneath her cheek. She is convinced that there is a wedding every day because of the solidarity tent set up outside the family home in the Hebron village of Kharaas. Her mother Shireen cries privately when Lamar insists on wearing a new dress every day."

Below is a translated version of Thaer's letter, by Jalal Najjar:

"My Beloved Lamar, forgive me because the occupation took me away from you, and took away from me the pleasure of witnessing my firstborn child that I have always prayed to God to see, to kiss, to be happy with. It is not your fault; this is our destiny as Palestinian people to have our lives and the lives of our children taken away from us, to be apart from each other and to have a miserable life. Nothing is complete in our lives because of this unjust occupation that is lurking on every corner of our lives turning it into eeriness, a continuous pursuit and torture. Despite the fact that I was deprived from holding you and hearing your voice, from watching you grow up and move around in the house and in your bed, and that I was deprived of my role

as a human and a father with my daughter, your existence has given me all the power and hope, and when I saw your picture with your mother in the sit-in tent, you were so calm staring in wonder at people, as if

you were looking for your father, looking at my pictures that are hung inside the tent asking in silence why is my father not coming back. I felt that you are with me, in my sentiment and inside my mind, as if you are a part of my heartbeats, steadfast and the blood that flows in my veins, opening all doors for me spreading clear skies around me, and unleashing your free childish voice after this long silence."

"Lamar my love: I know that you are not to be blamed and that you don't yet understand why your father is going through this battle of hunger strike for the 75th day, but when you grow up you will understand that the battle of freedom is the battle of going back to you, so that I can never be taken away from you again or to be deprived of your smile or seeing you, so that the occupier will never kidnap me again from you."

"When you grow up you will understand how injustice was brought upon your father and upon thousands of Palestinians whom the occupation has put in prisons and jail cells, shattering their lives and future for no reason other than their pursuit of freedom, dignity and inde-



pendence. You will know that your father did not tolerate injustice and submission, and that he would never accept insult and compromise, and that he is going through a hunger strike to protest against the Jewish state that wants to turn us into humiliated slaves without any rights or patriotic dignity."

"My beloved Lamar keep your head up always and be proud of your father, and thank everyone who supported me, who supported the prisoners in their struggle, and don't be afraid for God is with us always, and God never lets down people who have faith and patience. We are righteous, and right will always prevail against injustice and wrong doers."

"Lamar my love: that day will come, and I will make it up to you for everything, and tell you the whole story, and your days that will follow will be more beautiful, so let your days pass now and wear your prettiest clothes, run and then run again in the gardens of your long life, go forward and forward for nothing is behind you but the past, and this is your voice I hear all the time as a melody of freedom".

May Day Greetings from the Liaison Committee for the Fourth International to the International Working Class

The Liaison Committee for the Fourth International sends its warmest revolutionary greetings to the world's working class, the poor and oppressed and in particular to its fighting vanguard, the most class conscious elements who have now begun to emerge on a global scale to fight its cause under the banner of the world revolution so shamelessly abandoned by so many international groups claiming the name of Trotskyism in the past year.

Since the uprising on 15 February 2011 in Benghazi the 'Libyan revolution' has been the touchstone for revolutionist worldwide. The mass media supplied us with a great deal of lying propaganda, lies that the majority of the left groups would have no trouble exposing in an earlier period over Iraq, for example, but they did not try. They could not find and expose the racism of the 'rebels' shown in the lynchings and summary executions of black people with the transparent excuse that they were all "Gaddafi's mercenaries from Chad". They could not expose the CIA connections and obvious pro-imperialism of the Transitional National Council and even those who were eventually forced to acknowledge this told us that there was a 'real revolution' in the ranks of the 'rebels' pointing to the sole pathetic piece of 'evidence', the very sophisticated banner that opposed intervention with six people around it undoubtedly flown in from CIA headquarters in Langley Virginia to fool the gullible and those who wanted to be fooled.

Of course the LCFI recognise that Gaddafi was no revolutionary socialist, he was a bourgeois nationalist who ruled with a corrupt clique of capitalist backers, whose main aim was the preservation of the privileges of that group. He assisted Imperialism by supplying weapons to Southern Sudan to divide the country to enable the US to seize the oil resources then controlled by China. In return Omar al-Bashir (whom Gaddafi has assisted to come to power in the 1986 coup) was the foremost backer of the rebels in Benghazi, secretly supplying weapons and other assistance to overthrow Gaddafi, totally consistent with the completely unprincipled character of the national bourgeoisie.

Those on the 'left' who wish to assist in the overthrow of Assad in Syria, and they are generally the same culprits, can point to similar examples of his treachery and the favours Assad and his father Hafez al-Assad performed for Israel and the US in the Lebanon, intervening to prevent the defeat of the Falangists (Christian fascist forces), when the alliance between Lebanon's leftists and the Palestinians were on the brink of victory during the Civil War in 1976.

As with the policy of the United Front of work-

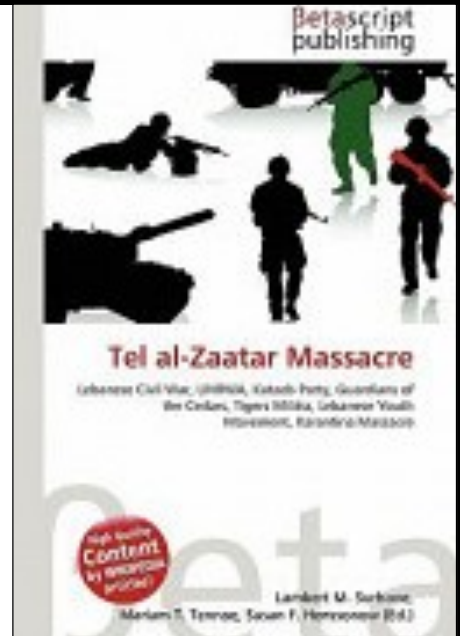
ing class parties the LCFI champions the Anti-Imperialist United Front as developed by Lenin and the Comintern in its first four Congresses. Just because the semi-colonial world is terrorised by brutal dictator does not mean that they are the main enemy of the world's working class and oppressed. That epithet belongs to Imperialism and global finance capital and to it alone in all wars and conflicts. A defeat for Imperialism has always two great progressive consequences, the strengthening of the class consciousness of the workers and poor in the oppressed nation under Imperialist attack and, far more importantly in the global balance of class forces, the dashing of illusions in the working class in the imperialist country in their 'own' bourgeoisie, as the defeat of US Imperialism in Vietnam showed.

As with the international class struggle, so with the national; you cannot fight for Imperialism in its foreign wars and consistently seek its overthrow at home. Domestically the first line of Trotsky's Transitional Programme, "The world political situation as a whole is chiefly characterized by a historical crisis of the leadership of the proletariat" is as true today as when written in 1938. Every refugee from the fight to build the world party of socialist revolution must deny the truth of that proposition, every refugee from the class struggle blames the working class, its lack of combativity, its inability to lead itself and thereby defends the class treachery of the trade union bureaucracy and their political representatives in parliament, the Labour and social democratic parties worldwide.

Trotsky said the TU British leaders were the "backbone of British Imperialism" and this is true of every international TU bureaucracy from the British TUC to COSATU in South Africa to those in Brazil, the CUT – (Central Única dos Trabalhadores), the CGT (Confederação Geral dos Trabalhadores) and the Conlutas (Coordenação Nacional de Lutas) and in Argentina the CGT, (Confederación General del Trabajo de la República). Without for a single moment neglecting our internationalist duties our main task today in our own class struggle is to fight and pose alternatives to these treacherous misleaders. The building of rank and file movements in the trade unions, the placing of demands on all those who claim leadership of the working class, the relentless exposing of the centrist who defend the left Trade Union bureaucrat and left nationalist misleaders is our central task in the class struggle.

As the Transitional Programme says:

"In the struggle for partial and transitional demands, the workers now more than ever before need mass organizations, principally trade unions. The powerful growth of trade unionism in



France and the United States is the best refutation of the preachments of those ultra-left doctrinaires who have been teaching that trade unions have "outlived their usefulness."

We therefore reject totally any suggestions that the trade unions have become simple agents of the capitalist state, that Trotsky's Transitional Programme no longer applies in 2012, that we must seek to build our own sect in isolation from the mass struggles of the working class. We are as confident as ever that with a correct orientation to Imperialism internationally and to the class struggle domestically based on irreconcilable opposition to the TU bureaucracy and to those who refuse to fight it consistently our small international current will undoubtedly find the ear of the resurgent vanguard of the class internationally.

- Defeat World Imperialism, finance capital and its agents in Syria, Iran and in every war!
- The Malvinas are part of Argentinean national territory, "Las Islas Malvinas son Argentinas", defeat British Imperialism in the South Atlantic!
- No reliance on Bourgeois nationalist leaders, even of the left variety like Hugo Chavez!
- Only the International Working class can defeat Global Imperialism!
- Build the World Party of Socialist Revolution!
- Forward to the Liaison Committee for the Fourth International!
- Liga Comunista—Brasil
- Tendencia Militante Bolchevique—Argentina
- Socialist Fight—Britain

1 May 2012

Leon Trotsky: I am confident of the victory of the Fourth International; Go Forward!

The Malvinas: the imperialist offensive in the South Atlantic

Statement of the Liaison Committee for the Fourth International; Before the powerlessness of the Argentine Government and the new imperialist offensive, build a working class and internationalist response

In three decades that have passed since the Malvinas war this is the first international declaration signed by Trotskyist political groupings which exist both in England (Socialist Fight) and Argentina (Bolshevik Militant Tendency). This is an international declaration that defends the defeat of imperialism and the oppressed country's victory, without however capitulating to the bourgeoisie of the oppressed country. We do not capitulate like all those who yesterday took an objectively pro-imperialist "third campist" position, not like those who yesterday supported the military regime, not today to the "national and popular" government of Cristina Kirchner. The Communist League of Brazil also signs this declaration. The war finished, with the surrender of Argentina, but imperialism continues its offensive in the South Atlantic.

The intensification of inter-bourgeois conflicts amidst the world capitalist crisis in recent months has also intensified the military show of force for geostrategic control by England over the South Atlantic. The last episode of the new crisis was the sending of a British nuclear submarine to the Malvinas. The government of Argentine President Cristina Fernandez Kirchner (CFK) cannot see more than timid populist complaints and powerless diplomacy with South American governments to flirt semi-colonialist also so inconsequential with the national aspirations of the Argentine population that feels secularmente stolen in their territories and their maritime wealth. The Falkland Islands have a quantity of oil three times bigger than all the rest of the United Kingdom.

The Malvinas war was an adventure to resurrect the Argentine military dictatorship by using a legitimate demand of an anti-imperialist cause

In the 30th day of March in 1982, 50 thousand workers took to the streets for 6 hours against the dictatorship in places as wide apart as Buenos Aires, Rosary, Neuquen, Mar del Plata, Tucuman and Mendoza in the biggest demonstration of the proletarian masses during the whole military regime. The height of the popular repudiation was a product of the political impasse in which the regime found itself. The growing economical crisis (bankruptcy of the banks and record numbers of other enterprises, inflation and unemployment, enormous foreign debt...) accentuated the internal division in the military government. This provoked the coup inside a coup that defeated Viola and led to the ascent of Galtieri and corroded the support of the small bourgeoisie for the regime. Hounded, the dictatorship appealed to a diversionary stratagem by provoking an external enemy and appropriated the secular aspiration of the Argentinean people to divert the popular dissatis-

faction. This tactic, despite the huge internal crisis, threw a lifeline to the Argentine military regime.

The dictatorship did not believe that British reaction would be military and was betting on the North American mediation. He was thinking that his paper credentials were good before the US imperialism, having supported directly the agents of the CIA and the military in Bolivia and in Nicaragua, and this was going to bring him in results and feeling hemmed as he was by the working class struggles. So he tried to exploit the discontent over the occupation of the Malvinas by the United Kingdom, believing that his imperialist masters of the USA would be acquiescent, they were going to try to avoid the war and to push the conflict for a negotiated settlement favourable to him.

But they did not realise that the economic inter-imperialist bonds; "the solidarity of imperialist class" between USA and GB were stronger than their "gratitude" for the lick-boots services given to them by the semi-colonial Argentinean bourgeoisie. Besides the complicity of the USA and of other Latin American dictatorships like Pinochet in Chile England also demanded that France give up the secret codes for disabling the Exocet missiles that she sold to Argentina.

The dictatorship did not believe that the result of the occupation of the Island would be a war and it was not prepared for the consequences. On the other hand to a military victory against a country that was not even prepared for the struggle it saved the dying imperialist British government.

Another fear of the dictatorship itself is that amid the crisis in which it was immersed, the defeat of imperialism also would not guarantee a new lease of life and it still would strengthen his worst enemy: the working class Argentinean masses. Since Trotsky argued in his famous interview to an Argentinean trade unionist Mateo Fosa, supposing a hypothetical war between Brazil governed by a dictatorship and democratic England:

If England should be victorious, she will put another fascist in Rio de Janeiro and will place double chains on Brazil. If Brazil on the contrary should be victorious, it will give a mighty impulse to national and democratic consciousness of the country and will lead to the overthrow of the Vargas dictatorship. The defeat of England will at the same time deliver a blow to British imperialism and will give an impulse to the revolutionary movement of the British proletariat. Truly, one must have an empty head to reduce world antagonisms and military conflicts to the struggle between fascism and democracy. Under all masks one must know how to distinguish exploiters, slave-owners, and robbers!"

Leon Trotsky, Anti-Imperialist Struggle, is Key to Liberation, An Interview with Mateo Fossa, (September 1938)

Similarly, England won the Argentine dictatorship had to fall in one way or the other, but, as we have said, world reaction was strengthened by the victory of imperialism in the war; both in England and in the USA of Reagan, in Pinochet's Chile, in South Africa under apartheid. In Peru, the South American country that was most



Cristina Kirchner is a minor partner of Imperialism, incapable of breaking the Anglo-Saxon blockade and less still of retaking the Malvinas

involved militarily in the conflict by supporting the Argentina fighter planes of Peruvian air force, vessels and medical staff, the defeat paved the way for the right with Alan Garcia and then with Fujimori.

In England, "Thatcher recovered from a disastrous opinion poll position due to her destruction of British jobs and manufacturing industry to sweep the next election because of it. This ideological victory set her up for her assault on the miners in 1985 and for her anti-union laws and privatisation of public assets. And need we point out the dire political consequence of this for the British and world working class however much imperialism's apologists on the far left might have sought to obfuscate their treachery by trumpeting the secondary gain of the overthrow of Galtieri.

The British working class were left ideologically leaderless by the national chauvinism of Labour leader Michael Foot and the other leaders, Regan/Volker defeated the 1981-82 Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization (PATCO) strike while the war was going on and embarked on a simultaneous ruthless offensive against the US working class, which set the pattern for the offensive of every capitalist class against their own working class worldwide. All this prepared for imperialism's crowning achievement, the world-historical defeat which the world working class suffered in the overthrow of the Soviet Union." (Ret Marut, The AIUF is the tactic, Permanent Revolution is the strategy for today's Imperialist wars on the semi-colonial world Winter 2011/2012).

This victory of imperialism in the only direct military confrontation against a South American semi-colonial country after World War II was a decisive battle of the war of planetary classes. The outcome of the war did not necessarily have to be this one, as the outcome of the Viet Nam war was not what imperialism had hoped

Leon Trotsky: I am confident of the victory of the Fourth International; Go Forward!

and this has changed the strategic control of imperialism in Asia, forcing it paradoxically to seek an alliance with the Chinese workers state against the USSR.

Even hating the dictatorship the people came out on the streets to protest en mass, especially against imperialism and to claim the archipelago, almost a hundred thousands of people volunteered to fight for the anti-imperialist cause, but fearing the population the dictatorship itself sabotaged the war effort, tortured and deliberately sent soldiers to their deaths by cold and hunger, refused to expropriate the Bank of London and British MNCs and repudiate the foreign debt to England.

More than the disproportion of forces was the political vileness of the dictatorship in the anti-imperialist struggle that forced Argentina to surrender on 14 June, after battles which cost the life of 649 Argentineans and 255 Britons. The frustration in the face of defeat continued making victims, ex-combatants centres indicate that since the end of the war, more than 450 former soldiers committed suicide because they are immersed in a deep state of depression. This number is higher than that of soldiers killed in battle on the Islands, which have a total of 326; 323 others were killed when a British submarine torpedoed the Cruiser General Belgrano. But the Argentina defeat was not still out there and the British imperialism followed advancing in an onslaught of low intensity over the last 30 years.

The war is finished, but the imperialist offensive in the Malvinas continues

In 1986, the United Kingdom claimed for the first time an exclusive fishing zone around the Malvinas, securing the right to practise their sovereignty up to 200 sea miles from the coast, including the right to the seabed and subsoil of the submarine platform. In 1993 the United Kingdom proclaimed also a sea zone of 200 sea miles around the islands of South Georgia and the South Sandwich. The kelpers are an auxiliary strength of the British garrison, like the Zionist settlers on the Gaza Strip were the auxiliaries of the Israeli army, they rely on the robbery done against Argentina after 1982, however since then a generation has passed.

British imperialism, component of the Anglo-Saxon bloc with the United States, formed a cordon that strings together Asunción, Saint Helena and Tristan da Cunha to Maldives. This connection serves the immediate geostrategic interests of England, it begins to demonstrate its value in times like the current one of economical retraction and the rising price of the oil amid new outbreaks of war in Africa and Middle East. In addition to the disputed oil there are fishing – including the important resource of krill, the possibility of trans-polar flights and the swiftest possible route to other members of the Anglo-Saxon bloc consisting of oceanic countries (Australia and New Zealand) and Antarctica as strategic reserve for an immediate future being the Antarctic sector on which one projects Malvinas the most interesting thing for the facilities for economic feasibility and contours.

Also geostrategic interests stand out in this area of the globe as the control of air and sea traffic in the South Atlantic, i.e. between South

America and Africa, designing to Antarctic seas, control of inter-oceanic passages between the Atlantic and the Pacific, communicating with the ocean from the South Atlantic to England being important maritime lines that lead to Australia.

Malvinas and the oil

The United Kingdom can get up to 176 million dollars for the taxes collected from the enterprises that explore gas and oil in the zone of the Malvinas Islands. The Daily Telegraph published the calculation that was conducted by Edison Investment consultant who estimate that if the four deposits being exploited at the present time can be exploited by Chinese oil companies, this would profit Great Britain.

Only the largest of these wells, Loligo squid, has a potential of about 4,700 million barrels of oil. This figure emerges when taking into account that, in the North Sea, the largest oilfield discovered in the last 11 years only contains a total of 300 million barrels.

This is the sum of calculation that the fossilized Sea Lion, the exploitation of the region's most developed, will produce some 448 million barrels over the next 20 years "in actuality, the entries by taxes and by fishing are of 40 million dollars for the region.

Cristina Kirchner is a minor partner of Imperialism, incapable of breaking the Anglo-Saxon blockade and less still of retaking the Malvinas

While the imperialism parades with self-confidence, CFK does not strike against the British interests in the Argentinean like the English property in Patagonia, seem unaware of the debt securities with London, do not confiscate Shell, it does not investigate the interests of the British crown itself in the lands of the Argentinean south. In fact, CFK shows a servility to the Anglo-Saxon block more than in 1982 and she backs off even more: asking for the intervention of the US in the question of the Malvinas! Doing honour to the saying from what the history repeats itself first as tragedy, and then as farce.

Imperialism gambles on the survival of the Anglo-Saxon bloc on the control of the Iranian plateau where it breaks the sap that nourishes the Eurasian core, particularly its industrial heart (China) and is the gateway to the greatest extent to Asia (Russia). On the Iranian plateau is decided the world's configuration for the 21st century both in the continental northern hemisphere as in the southern hemisphere. The importance of the Malvinas today is proportional to the isthmus of the Central America with the Channel of Panama.

Today the speculative finance capitalist negotiates in order to re-establish a material base by controlling the strategic extractive type of resource. They predict that the era which was dominated by speculative-financial is finished (the phenomenon where chips are gambled in the global casino is finished). It is necessary to begin to accumulate once more and for this they need to control the strategic extractive resources, the "real economy" so to guarantee his reconversion what today shows is the economical development obtained by the industrial Chinese bourgeoisie and the bureaucracy closely linked to it. This sector of the worldwide bourgeoisie can already be considered a



new player, holder of important tokens in the extreme south of the American continent.

In Argentina, China already has important properties in Chubut and Black Rio. In Chubut, the Pan American Energy (PAE) controls the deposit of I Close Dragón, one of the biggest oil reserves of the country. This enterprise is in the hands of the enterprise Bridle (the Bulgheroni family) and, from 2012, 50 % of the actions are in the hands of the Chinese company National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC). "With this agreement, the CNOOC gives a first step in the south of the South America", affirmed Carlos Bulgheroni in concluding the association agreement with the Chinese company.

In Río Negro, MCC Minera Sierra Grande, one of the most important underground iron mines on the continent, passed to the power of the company MCC, a business group of China in 2005. MCC has 107 thousand employees in the world, 70 subsidiaries and an annual income for 8.6 billion dollars.

The "third worldists", the capitalist unity of the Latin America and the semi-colonial countries developing in a healthy is a farces, none of the BRICS has effectively economic independence of the imperialism. Chile and South Africa are platforms of the Anglo-Saxon block in the south hemisphere. This explains the function of the majority fractions and of the Chilean State and their sepoy army. After the Argentinean army fell in disgrace before the imperialism, Chile became the gendarme of the Anglo-Saxon block in the southern extreme of the Americas from 1982 up to now. To the bankruptcy of the "third - worldists", we might add the historical Hindu block champion of the third worldists that today capitulates more and more to the Anglo-Saxon block. British imperialism needs to affirm constantly that it won in 1982 to negotiate with the geostrategic advantages that gives them the key to control the Southern seas and to enjoy their economic resources so as to negotiate better conditions inside the Anglo-Saxon bloc.

The contradictions and treasons of the left Trotskyist before the war of the Malvinas

For the PO, was the possibility of an Argentinean victory residing in a better use of the

Continued on p. 28

Cultural Imperialism, Ireland, Workers Power and the Sparts By Gerry Downing

Political Polemic

"I noted that individual cultures are generally tied to a particular space or territory and are shaped by shared memory. Global culture, by contrast, transcends territory and knows no frontier. It also has no collective memory. One can recount, even if it is contested, a Jewish or an Uzbek or a Zulu experience. That experience stems from a history with parameters defined by the narrator, but what is the global narrative? And how is a global identity constructed? There is no convincing answer because there is no meaningful global history."^[1]

In a recent (6 April) angry and semi-drunken Facebook exchange with 'Cogsy', a member of Workers Power, I received the following compliment, "Downing - are you a spasticated green nationalist dickhead, or just anti-modernist?"

He was forced to withdraw and apologise for the word 'spasticated' (about as politically incorrect as an untutored child) thus,

"I'm ashamed for using that word Grac. Apologies. But I stand by what I said on the Irish (mono) culture that silly romanticists like Downing espouse. I'm Irish myself, but like Brecht, I want to erase the traces of the past."

He stood by the rest and also the later,

"Stewards at an IRPSG event last year (or the year before), asked me not to inform Gerry because he's perceived as a dishonest, divisive, manipulative contrarian in the 'Brit left'. My own dealings with Gerry support this view."

I will let that entire rant ride as an expression of frustrated outrage at the Socialist Fight group for exposing the unprincipled pro-imperialist line of Workers Power on Libya. I will concentrate in this piece on the question of Cultural Imperialism. Cogsy kicked off his outrage at my posting of an 'up the RA' picture with this attack on Irish culture,

"This is a ridiculous diddly-aye Gaelic nationalist representation of the struggle, no? Totally with Lenin when he polemicised against Bauer's conception of 'national culture' - especially relevant to a hybrid nation like Ireland"

And the 'green nationalist' charge was later added to by,

"You miss the point completely on national culture - I get why Joyce and Beckett forsake the barren shithole - but I'll return to it tomorrow when I'm sober. And it has nothing."

Lenin's polemic with Bauer

I reread Lenin's polemic with Bauer in 1913 and concluded that Lenin was not got it entirely right (only about 95%) on this question then but

he later developed a far more sensitive line in defence of the Georgian nation against Stalin's brutalities there. And the Sparts (International Communist League, of which more later) and the Socialist Party (Cogsy's first two Irish groups before he became Ireland's only member of Workers Power) always selectively quote Lenin as follows,

"Marxism cannot be reconciled with nationalism, be it even of the 'most just', 'purest', most refined and civilised brand. In place of all forms of nationalism Marxism advances internationalism, the amalgamation of all nations in the higher unity, a unity that is growing before our eyes with every mile of railway line that is built, with every international trust, and every workers' association that is formed (an association that is international in its economic activities as well as in its ideas and aims)."

But they always 'forget' to quote what immediately follows,

"The principle of nationality is historically inevitable in bourgeois society and, taking this society into due account, the Marxist fully recognises the historical legitimacy of national movements. But to prevent this recognition from becoming an apologia of nationalism, it must be strictly limited to what is progressive in such movements, in order that this recognition may not lead to bourgeois ideology obscuring proletarian consciousness."

The awakening of the masses from feudal lethargy, and their struggle against all national oppression, for the sovereignty of the people, of the nation, are progressive. Hence, it is the Marxist's bounden duty to stand for the most resolute and consistent democratism on all aspects of the national question. This task is largely a negative one. But this is the limit the proletariat can go to in supporting nationalism."^[2]

By 1923 Christian Rakovsky, Trotsky's closest ally in the Left Opposition, had the following to say on culture and the national question

"Tell me, comrades, how many of you can explain in what way the October revolution solved the nationalities question? It did not resolve it, nor could it have. National culture does not cease to exist because the state is a workers' state or because the economy is no longer privately owned. National culture is 'the only way' through which the working and peasant masses will gain access to political and cultural life. And hand in hand with national consciousness comes that feeling of equality which Lenin speaks of in his memorandum. Because of centuries of tsarist domination, the nationalities are now experiencing that feeling of equality in a much deeper and stronger way than we think." So the problem posed before the Communist Party was not one of the suppression or "overcoming" of national



Culture of Uzbekistan; It is one of the brightest and original cultures of East. It has inimitable national music, dances and painting, unique national kitchens and clothes.

consciousness. *"It (the party) faces the question of how to find the bond between proletarian communist internationalism and the national development of wide layers of the peasant masse with their aspirations for a national life, for their own national culture, for their own national state."*^[3]

Cultural identity is all about equality

Now we have a much more sophisticated take on the national question. It is not an economic problem, it is not a cultural problem, it is not a social problem; it is a dialectical relationship between all these, revolving crucially on the question of equality, on how the mass of the workers and peasants in a given nation perceive their interests, their oppressors and their path to liberation. In other words for Marxists it is a question of how we translate the United Front approach of the Bolsheviks to the working class and other parties vying for the leadership of that class to the question of oppressed and oppressor nations via the Anti-Imperialist United Front.

From this it is clear that the struggle for a nation's culture identity is part of its struggle against Imperialist oppression. That is as obviously true of Ireland as it is of Palestine or any nation in Africa or Asia or Latin America. The periods of the greatest battles against Imperialist domination coincide with cultural flowering everywhere. Ireland's cultural leaders forsook London for Dublin in the last quarter of the 19th century. Remember the Abbey theatre^[4] with its great playwrights and the other writers and poets that emerged in that flowering of culture? Surely that was not a 'green nationalist' piece of backwardness. It certainly enriched the culture of the whole world and would not have emerged at all if there had not been a political and eventually a military struggle to assert Ireland's right to self-determination.

Similarly in the 1960s Irish traditional music was re-invigorated by the emergence of groups like Sean O Riada's Ceoltoiri Cualann, the Chieftains and the Dubliners. The old suddenly became

new again because the struggle against Imperialism in the north of Ireland was matched and reinforced and legitimised by this struggle against Cultural Imperialism, to assert a new Irish culture that came out of the old. The blind harper, Turlough O'Carlon (1670-1738), was a great an inspiration for O' Riada and that entire new generation. And remember it began with a group, the Clancy brothers, who were very much a part of the old tradition but also very much a part of the new Ireland as it emerged from the dark days of the 1950s.

In defining Cultural Imperialism Wikipedia quote John Downing and Annabelle Sreberny-Mohammadi who say,

"Cultural Imperialism signifies the dimensions of the process that go beyond economic exploitation or military force. In the history of colonialism, (i.e., the form of Imperialism in which the government of the colony is run directly by foreigners), the educational and media systems of many Third World countries have been set up as replicas of those in Britain, France, or the United States and carry their values. Western advertising has made further inroads, as have architectural and fashion styles. Subtly but powerfully, the message has often been insinuated that Western cultures are superior to the cultures of the Third World." [5]

The "ridiculous diddly-aye Gaelic nationalist representation of the struggle" is, of course, the Ireland that was produced by the counter-revolution that triumphed from 1921 as described so well by John M. Regan,

"In 1921, Michael Collins argued that the Anglo-Irish treaty offered nationalists the freedom to achieve freedom. In 1926, his successor Kevin O'Higgins went to London with a proposal to have the British monarch crowned king of a reunited Ireland. In 1933, General Eoin O'Duffy, leader of the Blueshirts, advocated a corporatist state on the Fascist Italian model, within a republican settlement. All three men accepted the Treaty, and were leaders of the party which implemented it during the first decade of independence." [6]

In other words the Ireland of the clerical fascist, of the corrupt politician and of the spivs and ruthless capitalist speculator and property tycoon is the irreconcilable opposite of the Ireland fought for by the national liberation fighter and the revolutionary socialist who have always responded to Ireland's call. Cogsy mistakes Ireland's rectum for its head. Of course we have to reject what is reactionary in national cultures; see the article on female mutilation *Women's oppression and the semi-colonial world; the imperialist infantilisation of Afghan and African women* in this issue.

The Sparts and Ireland

Cogsy first joined the Sparts in Ireland and it is not hard to understand why, he retains that imperialist arrogance and contempt for oppressed peoples that are so typical of that

group. The endnote gives the link for the text of the Spartacist League's leader Jim Robertson's infamous, and reportedly drunken, speech describing Albanians as a nation of goat fuckers. [7]

I had forgotten how truly appalling and chauvinist their position on Ireland was as set out in the Theses on Ireland (1977). [8] I read it last about 1986 and I am not sure I got to the end of it then. Every second sentence contains a direct lie or an outright political distortion. It lies that the conflict in the north of Ireland was and is a religious one. It insists in referring to Catholics and Protestants throughout as if these backward Irish could not get over their stupid religious differences. I remember back in 1969 Bernadette Devlin attacked the backwardness of this line of Imperialist propaganda; it was about Imperialist oppression not religious differences she correctly pointed out.

The document is full of patronising racism, "In the absence of any significant section of the Irish working class historically freed from national/communal insecurity". In other words why are these thick Paddys so worried about the murderous assaults of the RUC and B Specials? They are just suffering from some deep seated and irrational psychological "national/communal insecurity".

Then follows their reactionary theory of "interpenetrated peoples" which is how they avoid defending both the Irish nationalists and the Palestinians against murderous assaults. Ah no, they say, they are entitled to defend themselves (thank you very much!) but they can only do this via workers' militias which must contain a member of the opposing community to make sure it is not "nationalist". The Loyalist would, of course, immediately shoot the unfortunate foolish 'taig' who volunteered to join the Red Hand gang to make sure it was not 'sectarian'.

And then the following from AJP Taylor, whom they admit is a 'bourgeois historian';

"in the past ninety years the Protestants of Northern Ireland have been taught to think of themselves as a separate body, almost separate nationality within Ireland, and have established now a long term domination of Northern Ireland, partly, because of their superior economic strength, because of the backing they have received from the British Government, and partly because they are, or up to now have been, the more determine. For them Protestant domination is the answer to the situation in Northern Ireland."

Protestants of "Northern Ireland"

Where do you start? Amongst the "Protestants of Northern Ireland" (must use the official name of the British Imperialist-imposed state) there are fascist gangs who emerge in times of revolutionary upsurge. These are then taken by our chauvinists as the legitimate representatives of the entire Protestant community and so must be appeased. We say no, the fascists must be



In the 1960s Irish traditional music was re-invigorated by the emergence of groups like the Clancy Brothers, Sean O Riada's Ceoltoiri Cualann, the Chieftains and the Dubliners.

defeated, separated out from the mass of the Protestant working class and not appeased ideologically or politically like this.

And now the Big Lie on Lenin's position on the Rights of nations and the difference between oppressed and oppressor nations;

The Sparts say:

"Thus, the right to self-determination means simply the right to establish a separate state, the right to secede. We reject the notion that it means 'freedom from all outside interference and control' or entails economic independence. In the general sense the right to self-determination is unconditional, independent of the state that emerges or its leadership."

This is just garbage. What use is self-determination if it does not entail some form of economic independence to oppose the penetration of imperialist finance capital to super-exploit that nation?

They say,

'In general our support for the right to self-determination is negative: intransigent opposition to every manifestation of national oppression as a means toward the unity of the working class, not as the fulfilment of the 'manifest destiny' or 'heritage' of a nation, nor as support for 'progressive' nations or nationalism. We support the right of self-determination and national liberation struggles in order to remove the national question from the historic agenda, not to create another such question. Within the framework of capitalism there can be no purely democratic solution (for example through universal suffrage) to the national question in cases of interpenetrated peoples.'

Lenin thought otherwise:

"That is why the focal point in the Social-Democratic programme must be that division of nations into oppressor and oppressed which forms the essence of Imperialism, and is deceitfully evaded by the social-chauvinists and Kautsky. This division is not significant from the angle of bourgeois pacifism or the philistine Utopia of

peaceful competition among independent nations under capitalism, but it is most significant from the angle of the revolutionary struggle against Imperialism. It is from this division that our definition of the "right of nations to self-determination" must follow, a definition that is consistently democratic, revolutionary, and in accord with the general task of the immediate struggle for socialism."^[9]

That struggle for self-determination must be, "most significant from the angle of the revolutionary struggle against Imperialism." In other words imperialist-sponsored 'national liberation movements' like the Kosovan KLA, the Tibetan Dali Lama or the World Uyghur Congress are directly opposed to the interests of the international working class and cannot be supported at all.

Only nations have the right to self-determination. Imperialist enclaves like the Malvinas kelpers, the Gibraltar British, the Algerian colons and the Loyalists in the north of Ireland do not have the right to 'self-determination', they have no right to claim privileges and territory on behalf of their imperialist masters. 'Ulster' is not a nation and has no right to self-determination and the Loyalists have no right to prevent the re-unification of Ireland on any basis. Talk of 'opposition to the capitalist re-unification of Ireland' is to oppose the demand in its entirety on behalf of British Imperialism because the right to self-determination is a democratic right under capitalism and that is why Marxists advance it.

What is Loyalism?

"Though not yet (!!) a nation, the Protestants are certainly not a part of the Irish nation and are distinct from the Scottish and English nations. Presently their separate existence is defined in large part as against the Irish Catholic nation and at the ideological level is expressed in religious terms. With their own social and cultural fabric (epitomised in the Orange Order) and history of opposition to the Irish nationalist cause, they have therefore acted as the 'loyalist' allies of British Imperialism...In all likelihood, a definite resolution of the exact character of the Ulster Protestant community will be reached with the withdrawal of the British army and will depend on the circumstances surrounding this."

They are almost a nation, it seems, so self-determination is theirs. That they might be a colonial people like the French colons were who will either have to accept being a minority nationality in a re-unified nation, a socialist republic for Marxists or a 'democratic republic' for nationalists. Marxists say the 'democratic republic' is an illusion but we cannot either rule it out or oppose it politically if it comes into being as part of the struggle. To proclaim that there can be no 'capitalist united Ireland' is to abjectly capitulate to these fascist elements. It is to renounce revolution in general in the name of wanting a pure one. And where does the Loyalist 'superior economic strength' come from?

Discrimination is the obvious answer. And why are they 'more determined'? Because they have the state forces and the British army to back them up, obviously. Stout, brave Protestants as opposed to the cowardly 'Catholics' is the implication, here. And Spart leader James Robertson comes from stout US WASP stock.

And some things are just plain wrong like;

"This insurrection (of 1798) against British Imperialism, which was defeated in part by development of the reactionary sectarian Orange Order and the mobilisation of the peasantry by Catholic priests, was the opportunity for the establishment of a modern nation of the whole island."

Anyone with the most rudimentary knowledge of Irish history can tell you that the 'the mobilisation of the peasantry by Catholic priests' fought with the United Irishmen not with the British. This is an ignorant attempt to transpose the situation of the French monarchist counter-revolution peasantry in the Vendée war (1793 to 1796) to Ireland, where the monarch was head of a foreign occupying army and thus despised by the peasantry. Those mobilised by the British were typically the Catholic underlings of the aristocracy, *Squireens* and *Buckeens*, the lower middle class landlords, like Daniel O'Connell, who later posed as the Great Liberator. These were gathered in militias like the North Corks, who flew the Orange standard, brutally 'pacified' Ulster (the Presbyterian Republicans), and were credited with the invention of the pitch-cap torture and half-hanging.

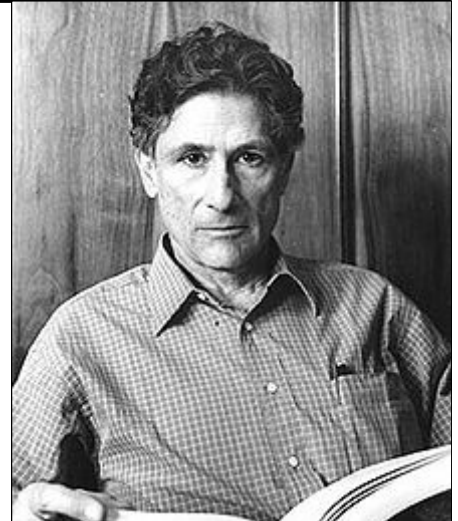
The Catholic Bishops naturally sided with the British but the lower orders of the clergy, like Fr. John Murphy in Wexford, who was pro-British before the uprising, led his parishioners with the call to "die like men defending themselves, rather than to fall with folded arms under the enemy's sword". He was horribly murdered by the redcoats, one of 20,000 who were slaughtered in those two short autumnal weeks in north County Wexford in the reaction that far worse than revolutionary France's entirely necessary 'reign of terror' (30,000 in six years).

Conclusion

Edward Said explains how Cultural Imperialism has become the automatic fall-back position for western intellectuals who have no sense of history and display the Hollywood/Coca-Cola/McDonalds Cultural Imperialist mind set,

"... the connection between imperial politics and culture is astonishingly direct. American attitudes to American "greatness", to hierarchies of race, to the perils of "other" revolutions (the American revolution being considered unique and somehow unrepeatable anywhere else in the world) have remained constant, have dictated, have obscured, the realities of empire, while apologists for overseas American interests have insisted on American innocence, doing good, fighting for freedom."^[10]

This is why Workers Power capitulated to imperialist propaganda, this is why the Sparts capitu-



Edward Said explains how cultural Imperialism has become the automatic fall-back position for western intellectuals who have no sense of history and have embraced the Hollywood/Coca-Cola/McDonalds cultural imperialist mind set.

late so completely to Imperialism in Ireland, Palestine, the Malvinas and elsewhere. In Ireland the latter only recruit Trinity College-type shoneen elements who have a contempt for their own nation, its culture and its struggles against Imperialism (their latest Irish recruit in London fits the bill exactly).

Imperialism is gearing up its war machine for ever greater conflicts; Syria and Iran are in their sights and then China and WWII. If we do not know how to fight Imperialism on all fronts we will become its playthings like Workers Power and the Sparts.

Endnotes

- [1] Robert Garson in *Ordering the International, History, Change and transformation*, Pluto press 2004, The Open University, Chapter 6, *Culture, identity and international relations*, P 223.
- [2] V. I. Lenin, Critical remarks on the national question, Written in October-December 1913.
- [3] Gus Fagan, Biographical Introduction to Christian Rakovsky. <http://www.marxists.org/archive/rakovsky/biog/biog3.htm>.
- [4] In its early years, the theatre was closely associated with the writers of the Irish Literary Revival... the Abbey served as a nursery for many of the leading Irish playwrights and actors of the 20th century, including William Butler Yeats, Augusta, Lady Gregory, Sean O'Casey and John Millington Synge (Wiki).
- [5] Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_Imperialism.
- [6] John M. Regan in *The Irish Counter-Revolution, 1921-1936*, Gill & Macmillan 1999, Dublin (fly cover).
- [7] What the Spartacist League Really Stand For: a self exposure by James Robertson.
- [8] The Spart's position on Ireland is the Theses on Ireland, Spartacist no 24, Autumn 1977 <http://www.workersrepublic.org/Pages/Ireland/Trotskyism/thesesonireland2.html>.

David North's SEP; a backward, workerist/reductionalist political current

By Tony Fox

Political Polemic

The North group (SEP, WSWs) has become a backward, workerist, reductionalist current. For them the revolution is an objectively unfolding process without the need for human agency which will come knocking on their door when they have exposed the frauds and the fakers who now lead the working class.

They have the objectivism of the old post war 'Pabloite' legacy, only they have objectivised the working class and not the petty bourgeoisie. The world revolution is powering forward and it is held back not by the leadership of the trade unions and bourgeois workers parties, but by the various centrist groups on the planet that claims the name of Trotskyism.

The WSWs and the SEP is the sole remaining revolutionary working class current on the planet, they tell us, engaged in a life-and-death struggle against these centrist groups, now bizarrely dubbed 'ex-lefts'. When these have been exposed and defeated, the Northites claim, the working class will turn to the SEP, because they will have nowhere else to go, and the world revolution will be consummated. They have adopted the worst features of the Gerry Healy's catastrophism and political culture and exaggerated these, thereby reducing Trotsky's Transitional Programme (TP) and the method behind it - to an absurdity.

1. The SEP says bourgeois-workers parties (BWPs) and trade unions - "... are no longer part of the workers' movement but mere instruments of state oppression". Contradictions have been eliminated theoretically in order to avoid the struggle against and where possible within the BWPs. The primary direction of the TP is the struggle within the trade unions to set the base against the bureaucratic misleadership. This is dismissed with contempt as reformist practice.

2. Abandonment of the struggle for the right of oppressed nations to self-determination thereby denying the Leninist division of the globe into Imperialist oppressor nations and colonial and semi-colonial oppressed nations. A failure to defend oppressed nation's right to self-determination is a total capitulation to imperialist ideology.

It amounts to a support to the strongest imperialist powers right to impose economic, social and cultural imperialism on all the oppressed. It is an ideological collapse before Wall Street and Coca Cola and Barak Obama. Marx made this very point in the First International when French delegates demanded that all the business of the International be conducted in French - they saw

their own culture as the only model for humanity; French social chauvinism.

3. A development of the backward social attitudes to Special Oppression of the old WRP, so dramatically exposed in the sexual abuse scandal that led to Healy's expulsion in October 1985. The SEP supported Roman Polanski against the raped 14 year old ("a teenage model" they said) and Dominique Strauss-Kahn against the hotel maid in New York. Racist remarks by Healy were cited during the 1985 split and the Aileen Jennings letter accepted unquestioning the homophobia of the organisation. This is the opening lines of her letter to the Political Committee that blew the party into smithereens:

"... Dear Comrades, During the course of action on the Manchester Area certain practices have come to light as to the running of 'Youth Training' by a homosexual and the dangers this holds for the party in relation to police provocations. I believe the Political Committee was correct in stating that a cover-up of such practices endangered the party from a serious provocation" ...

North (and the Sparts incidentally), thought that these matters were simply being used to hide the real political issues i.e. they were of no political importance in themselves. Although it is true that Mike Banda, the WRP general secretary and other trends, were then using these questions in this way, to hold that these matters were of no political importance was backward in the extreme. After all the whole driving forces of a social revolution is to eliminate all oppression in every form and to dismiss such terrible acts of oppression as that which Healy committed, as having no profound political implications, was to repudiate the central aim of the revolution itself as being of no importance. A false and outrageous counterposition.

This brings us to the posting on the WSWs site on 5 April by Joseph Kishore entitled, *The killing of Trayvon Martin and racial politics in America*. The piece seeks to prove that it was class and not race that motivated the murder and those who were trying to impute racial motives to George Zimmerman were defending the capitalist system and trying to divert the anger of the masses away from its real cause and into the blind alley of 'identity politics'. Zimmerman, the killer, was not motivated ostensibly by a white racist agenda and the fact that Martin was black - this very likely had nothing to do with the case. We must be sure of this - because Kishore informs us,

"Racial prejudice may have played a role in the killing of Martin, who was African-American. The initial public reaction, however, did not focus on race, but rather on the gross injustice

involved. As Martin's mother, Sabrina Fulton, put it, "It's not about black and white, it's about right and wrong."

As if the two were counterposed. Again the gross reductionism: all black people must forget about the history of Imperialist barbarism and slavery and get on with uniting with whites against capitalism.

Kishore, in directing his anger against the 'ex-lefts' makes the following outrageous counterposition,

"Toward this end, these forces have put forward a grossly distorted picture of American society, politics and history—one in which race, and not class, is the central issue."

The history of the USA is about class and NOT race is it? Of course behind the Civil War and the Jim Crow laws is class, the divide and rule, the poor whites and the Ku Klux Klan but given this history then we absolutely cannot ignore, downplay or even dispute the racial content of this history or the racial motivation of the Zimmerman murder or we can justly be called racist ourselves. Kishore then makes an even more suspect claim in repudiating Jesse Jackson;

"Jesse Jackson, for example, writes in a recent comment in the Guardian, "Racial profiling is all too common in the US, and has led to the killing of a young man." He compares the killing of Martin to that of Emmett Till, brutally murdered by racists in Jim Crow Mississippi in 1955."

This is what Jackson wrote in the Guardian of 30 March;

"Yet police authorities accepted Zimmerman's account of the killing - and proceeded to investigate the victim instead. It harks back to the case of Emmett Till, the young black man whose killers walked free in 1955; or the murder of the civil rights leader Medgar Evers, whose killers were not prosecuted for 30 years."

From what standpoint of 'Marxism' can you take issue with this statement? How can you use this so obviously correct statement to then claim that this MUST lead to the conclusion Kishore draws that,

"Not only is race the basic issue in the killing of Martin, Jackson insists, it is the basic issue in American society."

Jackson draws these wrong conclusions because he is, of course, a reformist bourgeois-Democrat politician. What he actually wrote is clearly wrong - an even "more perfect union" - led by capitalism, will never fight racism, it is a vital part of their armoury in dividing the US working class,

"Let us take a moment to grieve for Trayvon Martin, whose life was so brutally taken. Then let us move from moment to movement, and revive the struggle for a more perfect union. That would be fitting legacy for Trayvon."



Trayvon Martin and George Zimmerman. SEP Counterposition: *"Toward this end, these forces have put forward a grossly distorted picture of American society, politics and history—one in which race, and not class, is the central issue."*

Who would seek to prove that racism was not 'the real issue' in the US by proving that Jesse Jackson was an opportunist politician?

'Unconscious Marxists'

Of course there are sections of the petty bourgeoisie that want to deny the class content of racial murders, there are 'Pabloite' (as they were termed in the 1950s) groups who seek substitutes for the building of revolutionary leadership to lead the whole working class in the taking of power, but to oppose this and go to the total opposite extreme, in the name of combating this, is politically criminal. The US SWP, for example, were clearly wrong in making Fidel Castro and Malcolm X into 'unconscious Marxists' and thereby abandoning the struggle the win the vanguard of the class to be 'conscious Marxists', (the only possible type of Marxist).

But, by the time of his assassination, Malcolm X was seriously studying Marxism and was drawing class conscious conclusions. This was why the Nation of Islam members assassinated him. Had the SWP fought for consistent Trotskyism there is every chance they might have won him to go on to be a great Trotskyist leader, in a party of leaders, but they had abandoned the struggle by then.

Kishore then goes on to attack the International Socialist Organization and complained that for them "race is a virtual obsession" and they have outrageously, "called for an end to the "new Jim Crow", and then, in a completely dishonest amalgam, falsely accusing them of taking Jackson's stance on the matter. Kishore says,

"What is necessary is a "new civil rights movement," the ISO insists—meaning a race-based movement subordinated to the likes of Jesse Jackson and Sharpton, and, therefore, the Democratic Party and the Obama administration."

Well if that is really what the ISO think then Kishore will need a bit more than an assertion to prove it. Kishore then goes on to complain that

control over the working class."

There it is. The SEP would now be leading the revolution were it not for the above mentioned and their promoting 'identity politics'.

Kishore claims,

"They are seeking to establish the political conditions for once again subordinating the working class to the election of Obama. More fundamentally, their aim is to undermine and pre-empt any development of independent class consciousness, which poses a threat to the capitalist system. They are exploiting the killing of Trayvon Martin for this deeply reactionary purpose."

But Lenin had a far more dialectical approach than this backward workerism. Look at how he puts the matter in 'What is to be done?' - in 1902: ... "In a word, every trade union secretary conducts and helps to conduct "the economic struggle against the employers and the government". It cannot be too strongly maintained that this is still not Social-Democracy (communism), that the Social-Democrat's ideal should not be the trade union secretary, but the tribune of the people, who is able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression, no matter where it appears, no matter what stratum or class of the people it affects; who is able to generalise all these manifestations and produce a single picture of police violence and capitalist exploitation; who is able to take advantage of every event, however small, in order to set forth before all his socialist convictions and his democratic demands, in order to clarify for all and everyone the world-historic significance of the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat."

<http://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1901/witbd/iii.htm>

It is abundantly clear that the trade union branch secretary is the model here for North and Kishore (or would be if the trade unions (AND MEMBERS) had not now become part of capitalism, period.) The Marxist Social-Democrats (this was their name up to the 1917

every recent social movement from the Arab uprisings to the Occupy movement has begun with a struggle against injustice but have been hijacked by these 'ex-lefts' into bogus identity politics issues, thereby marginalising the issues of class. He tells us that,

"The politics of Jackson, Sharpton, the ISO and the entire coterie of "left" supporters of the Democratic Party represents the interests of a layer of the upper-middle class that is deeply worried that it is beginning to lose political

Russian Revolution) looked to, "... every manifestation of tyranny and oppression, no matter where it appears, no matter what stratum or class of the people it affects; who is able to generalise all these manifestations and produce a single picture of police violence and capitalist exploitation".

There is the dialectical method as opposed the North's turgid and rigid counterposition of race and class. Every black workers is both black and a worker, they have a history of both race and class oppression and are experiencing it right now. To tell them to ignore the race and concentrate on the class, is itself lecturing, bordering on racism.

North's anti-dialectics

We recall North's attack on Gerry Healy's version of dialectics back in 1985 - and what his solution was. He claimed that:

"... as materialists, we cannot refer to man as a thinking body, because that would reject historical materialism, which insists that the essence of man is not consciousness but labour."

As the late Sy Landy of the US 'League for the Revolutionary Party' remarked earlier:

"... North's unbelievable mechanical view cannot show the difference between mankind and beavers"...

Z.A. Jordan's book *The Evolution of Dialectical Materialism* has a far more dialectical understanding of mind and body than the crudity of North.

"While the old philosophy has taken as its starting point the statement 'I am an abstract, an exclusively thinking being, and my body does not belong to my essence', the new philosophy starts with the statement 'I am a real, a sensuous being, my body belongs to my being and, indeed, my body in its totality is myself, is itself my essence'."

The soul and the brain are mere hypostatizations of certain functions of the human individual and they disrupt what is in fact an inseparable totality; the separation of the soul from the body or of the sensuous from the non-sensuous essence of man is a purely theoretical act which we constantly refute in our everyday life and to which nothing corresponds in reality. Man is a 'soul invested brain' (das beseelte Gehirn) and an 'embodied soul' (die eingekorperte Seele). Feuerbach regarded man as a mind in a body and as a part of nature."

From Z.A. Jordan's book *The Evolution of Dialectical Materialism*, published by Macmillan, 1967. <http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/en/jordan2.htm>

It really is time to take these questions far more seriously in the Trotskyist movement if we are not all to end up like North's pathetically mechanical dead-end "Marxism".

Tariq Mehanna's powerful sentencing statement

Nancy Murray of the ACLU explained in an article for the Boston Globe the extent of his involvement in "terrorism" was that he had *"emailed friends, downloaded videos, translated and posted documents on the web, and travelled to and from Yemen in 2004."*

She continued, *"No evidence was presented in court directly linking him to a terrorist group. He never hatched a plot — indeed, he objected when a friend (who went on to become a government informer and has never been charged with anything) proposed plans to stage violent attacks within the United States. He never had a weapon."* Although Mehanna did lie to the FBI, there was no justification for prosecutor Alope Chakravarty to stress the "gravity" of Mehanna's offences, but it fitted — and fits — a pattern of demonizing Muslims, even when there are first amendment issues, involving free speech, even when there is evidence of dubious FBI activity, and even when it is undisputed that Mehanna never raised arms against anyone, and never believed that it was just or appropriate to attack any American on US soil.

Spoken to Judge O'Toole during his sentencing, April 12th 2012:

In the name of God, the most Gracious, the most Merciful.

Exactly four years ago this month, I was finishing my work shift at a local hospital. As I was walking to my car I was approached by two federal agents. They said that I had a choice to make: I could do things the easy way, or I could do them the hard way. The "easy" way, as they explained, was that I become an informant for the government, and if I did so I would never see the inside of a courtroom or a prison cell. As for the hard way, this is it. Here I am, having spent the majority of the four years since then in a solitary cell the size of a small closet, in which I am locked down for 23 hours each day. The FBI and these prosecutors worked very hard — and the government spent millions of tax dollars — to put me in that cell, keep me there, put me on trial, and finally to have me stand here before you today to be sentenced to even more time in a cell.

In the weeks leading up to this moment, many people had offered suggestions as to what I should say to you. Some said I should plead for mercy in hopes of a light sentence, while others suggested I would be hit hard either way. But what I want to do is just talk about myself for a few minutes.

When I refused to become an informant, the government responded by charging me with the "crime" of supporting the mujahidin fighting the occupation of Muslim countries around the

Islamophobia

world. Or, as they like to call them, "the terrorists." I wasn't born in a Muslim country, though. I was born and raised right here in America and this is something which angers many people: how is it that I can be an American and believe the things I believe, take the positions I take? Everything a man is exposed to in his environment becomes an ingredient that shapes his outlook, and I'm no different. So, in more ways than one, it's because of America that I am who I am.

When I was six, I began putting together a massive collection of comic books. Batman implanted a concept in my mind, introduced me to a paradigm as to how the world is set up: that there are oppressors, there are the oppressed, and there are those who step up to defend the oppressed. This resonated with me so much that throughout the rest of my childhood, I gravitated towards any book that reflected that paradigm — Uncle Tom's Cabin, The Autobiography of Malcolm X, and I even saw an ethical dimension to The Catcher in the Rye.

By the time I began high school and took a real history class, I was learning just how real that paradigm is in the world. I learned about the Native Americans and what befell them at the hands of European settlers. I learned about how the descendents of those European settlers were in turn oppressed under the tyranny of King George III. I read about Paul Revere, Tom Paine, and how Americans began an armed insurgency against British forces — an insurgency we now celebrate as the American Revolutionary War. As a kid I even went on school field trips to the sites of its battlefields, some just blocks from this courthouse.

I learned about Harriet Tubman, Nat Turner, John Brown, and the fight against slavery in this country. I learned about Emma Goldman, Eugene Debs, and the struggles of the labor unions, working class, and poor. I learned about Anne Frank, the Nazis, and how they persecuted minorities and imprisoned dissidents. I learned about Rosa Parks, Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, and the civil rights struggle. I learned about Ho Chi Minh, and how the Vietnamese fought for decades to liberate themselves from one invader after another. I learned about Nelson Mandela and the fight against apartheid in South Africa.

Everything I learned in those years confirmed what I was beginning to learn when I was six: that throughout history, there has been a constant struggle between the oppressed and their oppressors. With each struggle I learned about, I found myself consistently siding with the oppressed, and consistently respecting those who stepped up to defend them — regardless of nationality, regardless of religion. And I never



Dr. Tarek Mehanna is a 28-year-old Muslim, an Egyptian-American and a graduate of the Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health.

threw my class notes away. As I stand here speaking, they are in a neat pile in my bedroom closet at home.

From all the historical figures I learned about, one stood out above the rest. I was impressed by many things about Malcolm X, but above all, I was fascinated by the idea of transformation, his transformation. I don't know if you've seen the movie "X" by Spike Lee, it's over three and a half hours long, and the Malcolm at the beginning is different from the Malcolm at the end. He starts off as an illiterate criminal, but ends up a husband, a father, a protective and eloquent leader for his people, a disciplined Muslim performing the Hajj in Makkah, and finally, a martyr. Malcolm's life taught me that Islam is not something inherited; it's not a culture or ethnicity.

It's a way of life, a state of mind anyone can choose no matter where they come from or how they were raised. This led me to look deeper into Islam, and I was hooked. I was just a teenager, but Islam answered the question that the greatest scientific minds were clueless about, the question that drives the rich & famous to depression and suicide from being unable to answer: what is the purpose of life? Why do we exist in this Universe?

But it also answered the question of how we're supposed to exist. And since there's no hierarchy or priesthood, I could directly and immediately begin digging into the texts of the Qur'an and the teachings of Prophet Muhammad, to begin the journey of understanding what this was all about, the implications of Islam for me as a human being, as an individual, for the people around me, for the world. And the more I learned, the more I valued Islam like a piece of gold. This was when I was a teen, but even today, despite the pressures of the last few years, I stand here before you, and everyone else in this courtroom, as a very proud Muslim.

With that, my attention turned to what was

happening to other Muslims in different parts of the world. And everywhere I looked, I saw the powers that be trying to destroy what I loved. I learned what the Soviets had done to the Muslims of Afghanistan. I learned what the Serbs had done to the Muslims of Bosnia. I learned what the Russians were doing to the Muslims of Chechnya. I learned what Israel had done in Lebanon – and what it continues to do in Palestine – with the full backing of the United States.

And I learned what America itself was doing to Muslims. I learned about the Gulf War, and the depleted uranium bombs that killed thousands and caused cancer rates to skyrocket across Iraq. I learned about the American-led sanctions that prevented food, medicine, and medical equipment from entering Iraq, and how – according to the United Nations – over half a million children perished as a result. I remember a clip from a ‘60 Minutes’ interview of Madeline Albright where she expressed her view that these dead children were “worth it.” I watched on September 11th as a group of people felt driven to hijack airplanes and fly them into buildings from their outrage at the deaths of these children. I watched as America then attacked and invaded Iraq directly. I saw the effects of ‘Shock & Awe’ in the opening days of the invasion – the children in hospital wards with shrapnel from American missiles sticking out of their foreheads (of course, none of this was shown on CNN). I learned about the town of Haditha, where 24 Muslims – including a 76-year old man in a wheelchair, women, and even toddlers – were shot up and blown up in their bedclothes as they slept by US Marines. I learned about Abeer al-Janabi, a fourteen-year old Iraqi girl gang-raped by five American soldiers, who then shot her and her family in the head, then set fire to their corpses.

I just want to point out, as you can see, Muslim women don’t even show their hair to unrelated men. So try to imagine this young girl from a conservative village with her dress torn off, as she is being sexually assaulted by not one, not two, not three, not four, but five soldiers. Even today, as I sit in my jail cell, I read about the drone strikes which continue to kill Muslims daily in places like Pakistan, Somalia, and Yemen. Just last month, we all heard about the seventeen Afghan Muslims – mostly mothers and their kids – shot to death by an American soldier, who also set fire to their corpses.

These are just the stories that make it to the headlines, but one of the first concepts I learned in Islam is that of loyalty, of brotherhood – that each Muslim woman in the world is my sister, each man is my brother, and together, we are one large body who must protect each other. In other words, I couldn’t witness these things befalls done to my brothers & sisters – including by America – and remain neutral. My sympathy for the oppressed continued, but was now more personal, as was my respect for those defending them.

I mentioned Paul Revere – when he jumped on a horse and went on his midnight ride, it was for

the purpose of warning the people that the British were marching to Lexington to arrest Sam Adams and John Hancock, then on to Concord to confiscate the weapons stored there by the Minutemen. By the time they got to Concord, they found the Minuteman waiting for them, weapons in hand. They fired at the British, fought them, and beat them. From that battle came the American Revolution. There’s an Arabic word to describe what those Minutemen did that day. It was a word repeated many times in this courtroom.

That word is: JIHAD, and this is what my trial was about. All those videos and translations and childish bickering over ‘Oh, he translated this paragraph’ and ‘Oh, he edited that sentence,’ and all those exhibits revolved around a single issue: Muslims who were defending themselves against American soldiers doing to them exactly what the British did to America. It was made crystal clear at trial that I never, ever plotted to “kill Americans” at shopping malls or whatever the story was. The government’s own witnesses contradicted this claim, and we put expert after expert up on that stand, who spent hours dissecting my every written word, who explained my beliefs. Further, when I was free, the government sent an undercover agent to prod me into one of their little “terror plots,” but I refused to participate. Mysteriously, however, the jury never heard this.

So, this trial was not about my position on Muslims killing American civilians. It was about my position on Americans killing Muslim civilians, which is that Muslims should defend their lands from foreign invaders – whether they are Soviets, Americans, or Martians. This is what I believe. It’s what I’ve always believed, and what I will always believe. This is not terrorism, and it’s not extremism.

It’s the simple logic of self-defence. It’s what the arrows on that seal above your head represent: defence of the homeland. So, I disagree with my lawyers when they say that you don’t have to agree with my beliefs – no. Anyone with common sense and humanity has no choice but to agree with me. If someone breaks into your home to rob you and harm your family, logic dictates that you do whatever it takes to expel that invader from your home. But when that home is a Muslim land, and that invader is the US military, for some reason the standards suddenly change.

Common sense is renamed “terrorism” and the people defending themselves against those who came to kill them from across the ocean become “the terrorists” who are “killing Americans.” The mentality that America was victimized by when British soldiers walked these streets 2 ½ centuries ago is the same mentality Muslims are victimized by as American soldiers walk their streets today. It’s the mentality of colonialism. When Sgt. Bales shot those Afghans to death last month, I followed the discussion in the media just to see what people were saying and what I noticed was that all of the focus was on him – his life, his stress, his PTSD, the mort-

gage on his home – as if he was the victim. I didn’t see anyone talking about the people he actually killed, as if they’re not real, they’re not humans.

Unfortunately, this mentality trickles down to everyone in society, whether they realize it or not. Even with my lawyers, it took nearly two years of discussing, explaining, and clarifying before they were finally able to think outside the box and at least ostensibly accept the logic in what I was saying. Two years! If it took that long for people so intelligent, whose job it is to defend me, to de-program themselves, then to throw me in front of a randomly selected jury under the premise that they’re my “impartial peers,” I mean, come on. I wasn’t tried before a jury of my peers because with the mentality gripping America today, I have no peers. Counting on this fact, the government prosecuted me – not because they needed to, but simply because they could.

I learned one more thing in history class: America has historically supported the most unjust policies against its minorities – practices that were even protected by the law – only to look back later and ask: ‘What were we thinking?’ Slavery, Jim Crow, the internment of the Japanese during World War II – each was widely accepted by American society, each was defended by the Supreme Court. But as time passed and America changed, both people and courts looked back and asked ‘What were we thinking?’ Nelson Mandela was considered a terrorist by the South African government, and given a life sentence. But time passed, the world changed, they realized how oppressive their policies were, that it was not he who was the terrorist, and they released him from prison. He even became president. So, everything is subjective – even this whole business of “terrorism” and who is a “terrorist.” It all depends on the time and place and who the superpower happens to be at the moment.

In your eyes, I’m a terrorist, I’m the only one standing here in an orange jumpsuit, and it’s perfectly reasonable that I be standing here in an orange jumpsuit. But history repeats itself. One day, America will change and people will recognize this day for what it is. They will look at how hundreds of thousands of Muslims were killed and maimed by the US military in foreign countries, yet somehow I’m the one going to prison for “conspiring to kill and maim” in those countries – because I support the Mujahidin defending those people. They will look back on how the government spent millions of dollars to imprison me as a “terrorist,” yet if we were to somehow bring Abeer al-Janabi back to life in the moments she was being gang-raped by your soldiers, to put her on that witness stand and ask her who the “terrorists” are, she sure wouldn’t be pointing at me.

The government says that I was obsessed with violence, obsessed with “killing Americans.” But, as a Muslim living in these times, I can think of a lie no more ironic.

Tarek Mehanna 4/12/12

The French Elections

Letters page

From Gerry Downing

Now if we analyse the results of the first round of the French elections it is clear that Weekly Worker is wrong, Mélenchon's votes did not go to the PS and Hollande, the PS vote held between the polls and the election. Mélenchon's lost votes were a straight transfer to Marine Le Pen (MLP) from racist workers and middle class voters who were impressed by his nationalism, his Islamophobia and his support for French Imperialism over Libya and now Syria but now became more impressed by a more determined defender of the 'nation', Marine Le Pen. No one was fooled by his bogus "anti-racist" attack on her – "I'm not a racist BUT no veils and no more immigrants". The collapse of the NPA and LO vote is likewise down to this factor, a support for and a total inability to strongly oppose French Imperialism in its foreign and therefore in its domestic agenda. These racist worker's votes may now transfer in large enough numbers to elect Hollande, or they may all go to Sarkozy. A right wing dynamic saw these backward French voters swing back to the right as soon as they recognised a more consistent and determined racist on the secondary candidates Mélenchon and Le Pen. And on this crucial point we may yet see the victory of Sarkozy over Hollande, after all who is the more consistent and determined defender of the running class and French Imperialism? I fear that this right wing dynamic that shifted these votes from Mélenchon to Hollande may yet result in the election of Sarkozy. I hope I am wrong.

Reply from Yao Wenyan

Yes, you are. And fully.

There were no "Mélenchon votes" but polls often their analysis get wrong. Even this 11% was a very good result for him and the PCF but it was just a transfer from the extreme left constituency to Mélenchon and from Mélenchon they will go to Hollande. If Mélenchon wins so many votes it is because the tactics of the extreme left were stupid and personally he was a good demagogue, a good tribune (he would be a more popular tribune if he had not been an former minister)

The FN vote is a crisis vote from many "left" voters who take the more factual, possible, credible vote to signify their rage against the consequences of the crisis. Marine Le Pen is against the euro, the BCE, the EU with a very rightist "workers" populist style of speech:

No worker bothers about Libya or Syria and this questions had no weight at all in the recent campaign. Only local matters are taken into account for the ones who vote FN; mostly shopkeepers, reactionaries, small farmers who vote for her now and only now. MLP has won 3 million votes. But it is not a support vote to her programme but

a rage vote against the establishment; workers who had voted "socialist" or "communist" in the past but are fed up first of all with the consequences of the crisis and secondly with the "left".

Hollande is a very bad candidate but there is such overwhelming disgust at Sarkozy that even with an advantage in numbers (if you take the right vote it is 10 points more than the left vote) then the most possible outcome is the triumph of Hollande and with a big margin.

Why? Many centrist, voters of Le Pen (the worker lawyer) and even traditional right voters just can't stand Sarkozy. The polls are giving Hollande 55% against 45% to Sarkozy and that is widening. The problem will be after because Hollande has implemented the IMF plan for French workers in his manifesto, but this will not be so simple to put it into practice. You will have the FN and the Sarkozy right (who are quite extreme) waiting for the massive rejection of that policy. And they will win the next election. You know now that is what happens everywhere.

The NPA/LO? No chance whatsoever, they have been reduced to nothing because the NPA is a mess and LO has no idea of tactics: from an ultra-left campaign they have passed to not calling for the defeat Sarkozy "because Hollande has the same politics" at the moment when every conscientious worker wants to sack Sarkozy.

Every one I know will go vote Hollande without the slightest illusion in him, but to give Sarkozy what he deserves. LO does not understand so simple a fact. Hopeless!

See you in the Fête?

From Gerry Downing:

But this is how Alex Callinicos described the Front Gauche very recently,

"The Front de Gauche is dominated by the PCF, a decrepit, thoroughly opportunist organisation, and Mélenchon, who is a social democrat of a traditional French republican kind, strongly nationalist, taking an Islamophobic position on the veil, and supporting the NATO intervention in Libya." International Socialist Journal 134.

Reply from Yao Wenyan

Callinicos is right on Mélenchon but not on "Islamophobic". On the contrary, he has made very good statements calling immigrants "our brothers" and calling to put a stop to segregation. The veil interdiction "in public schools and public works sites" (not in the streets) is another matter and even LO support the law.

Mélenchon was born in the Maghreb and has lived part of his infancy there. He is not "Islamophobic"; he and others, me too, are against women's oppression. For the rest, there was no "Mélenchon 17%" or the like. Those were polls estimations and were-wrong ones. Period.

The ones who vote Le Pen vote because of the factual consequences of the crisis and you will

see that these same ones who are being fought for by the very racist orientation of Sarkozy will vote Hollande. This will prove that their main concern is the crisis and not the immigrants. Otherwise you could not explain the polls estimations for the second round (Hollande very much in advance).

The Le Pen vote is as the extreme left vote; a "protest vote". And voters use the one which seems the most able to bother the UMP-PS establishment. It is not a vote of support for ideas. French people say "Pour les enmerder" ("to shit on them"). There is no "fascist danger" whatsoever. Even FN has problems to have enough candidates for the next parliamentarianism elections, they have very few real militants and Marine Le Pen is trying to change even the name of her party to make it a sort of party in France like Fini's in Italy. They are right wing but not fascist at the moment, there were almost no FN people giving out leaflets and that is not changing.

To be a FN voter in France is still shameful and people who have the intention of voting FN don't say it to the pollsters, who make frequently mistakes anyway

There was a big mobilisation for Mélenchon, but it is the same people who mobilise for every worker's fight, the ones who are willing to fight and mobilise and who were enthusiastic for a real popular tribune, because Mélenchon is a good candidate and a good demagogue. And a former Trotskyist also.

But when Hollande said that there were risk that he could not get to the second round, many people who want the Mélenchon programme, turned to Hollande, and not to Marine Le Pen.

There were some workers who vote FN but not for her programme. In *Le Monde* there were some interviews from workers who said clearly that they have send a warning to the "political class" but that they have always voted left and that they will vote Hollande second round. Those ones will be on the front line when the masses will go out on the streets and they will forget totally MLP and elections. It is a matter of French workers idiosyncrasy and the result of the crisis who stirs and shake the workers conscience but not always in the beginning going in a good direction.

But they are no fools and big new bourgeois like the Le Pens don't have the slightest intention of becoming popular fascist leaders, Marine even less so, she does very well as right wing parliamentary leaders like Fini or similar.



Jean-Luc Mélenchon, "there was no "Mélenchon 17%" or the like."

Bolshevism vs. SWP: To lead the working class or follow the TU bureaucracy

By Ret Marut

Political polemic

In an article entitled *The birth of the Bolshevik party* in *Socialist Worker* on 21 January last Julie Sherry correctly sets out the differences between a revolutionary party as pioneered in theory and practice by Lenin and a reformist "party of the whole class" as theorised by Karl Kautsky,

"The Mensheviks stuck to the 'common-sense' idea that a socialist party meant one party for all workers, even if they had different politics. But Vladimir Lenin, a prominent leader of the Bolsheviks, had another idea of what a party should be. His model starts with the fact that there is a spectrum of ideas within the working class—from revolutionary to reactionary, with most people falling somewhere in between. So while some workers accept racist ideas, for example, others are staunchly anti-racist. Lenin said a revolutionary party should group together those with the most advanced ideas so they can try to win over other people."

There, in a few pithy sentences, is the essence of Leninism. So the British SWP has made a great leap forward and at last overcome its opportunism and tailendist political method? Unfortunately no because later in the piece she manages to assert the exact opposite to this position,

"The Bolsheviks understood that the party learns from the working class and is forged in the thick of class struggle. Its role is not to bring 'great ideas' ready-made to workers too ignorant to have them. It is to take the best ideas thrown up by workers themselves, such as the soviets, and attempt to generalise them."

Not even the "great ideas ready-made" in the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky were sufficient to lead these workers; apparently, they would just lead themselves. And this exactly fits their programme of bowing to the TU bureaucracy. And then she finished with a tale of how the revolution in 1917 triumphed which is simply a fairy story. Apparently,

"The Bolsheviks did make mistakes... Leon Trotsky described the party as lagging behind the working class. It was disorientated by the sudden dramatic change in the political environment."

This fails to identify who it was lagged behind the working class. The editorial board of Pravda

included Vyacheslav Molotov and Alexander Shlyapnikov who had opposed Alexander Kerensky's provisional government but these were ousted by Stalin and Matvei Muranov when they returned from exile in March 1917, following the February revolution. They swung the editorial line to the right and to critical support for Kerensky with the help of Lev Kamenev. The ranks of the party were for continuing the revolution and so were opposed to this line that "by mid-March rank and file worker Bolshevik cells in the Vyborg district were voting for calls to expel the Pravda leadership from the party." 1917 Russian Revolution - Lenin Re-arms the Party, <http://www.permanentrevolution.net/entry/1179>

"The vacillations of the Bolshevik leaders in Petrograd did not reflect the outlook of the rank and file Bolshevik workers who were more in touch with the mood in the factories and barracks. The Bolsheviks in the Vyborg district demanded that power be taken over by the Soviet."

Bolshevism: The Road to Revolution by Alan Woods <http://www.marxist.com/bolshevism-old/part6-2.html>

So Sherry's "a massive argument in the party over what to do in a 'dual power' situation", in fact was a struggle between Lenin in alliance with the ranks against a layer of old Bolshevik leaders who had taken a right wing position of support for Kerensky. When Lenin returned in early April and put forward his revolutionary April Theses and then Trotsky took the same line they won this argument because there was already support for it in the ranks of the Bolshevik party and some middle layers and among the best of the other groups who were serious about revolution.

But nonetheless there is a grain of truth or, more correctly, good reason for the confusion displayed in the centrist method of Julie Sherry and the SWP. It was not enough to simply to have the correct programme and put that forward to the masses in a propagandistic manner. That is what Lenin learned from the failed revolution of 1905 and the appearance of the soviets; there he saw how he had "bent the stick". But that did not mean that Lenin now adopted the method of the Mensheviks, which produced such good but short-term results. Their opportunism contained an element of listening to the masses, but it tail ended them to such a degree



The SWP tail the working class; the UAF allow David Cameron as a sponsor because they lie that fascism is not a class issue.

that it quickly led to disaster when reality imposed itself on the masses and on them. From this experience he developed the theory of the Leninist party and with it the methodology of communism, how to intervene and win the leadership of the masses. First let us say what is wrong with the Cliffite method of approach. These quotes here are from Bruce Landau, a "left Shachtmanite" in the US in 2002: [1]

Cliff ... quotes the liberal historian Richard Pipes, who characterises Economism as that trend "which subordinated politics as a matter of principle", and Cliff affirms that here Pipes has "put the 'economists' in correct perspective"... But this critique is an extremely superficial one and therefore wrong. Pipes is wrong, (Menshevik Theodore) Dan is wrong and Cliff is wrong. All three of them are transfixed by Economism's form, by its temporary appearance, and they therefore miss its essence entirely.

The essence of Economism was its fundamental, unwavering opportunism, its determination that the role of Marxists was to passively tail after the mass working-class movement at each stage of its development rather than to act as the class's vanguard. It refused to assume the responsibility to speak to the proletariat about its class tasks as a whole, to pound away at what the class in general did not yet know and refused to believe. The Economists preferred to bow before every prejudice currently harboured by the workers with whom they made contact."

The strike movement to which the Economists

Leon Trotsky: I am confident of the victory of the Fourth International; Go Forward!

were adapting overcame its disinterest in politics by 1901 (without the help of the Economists), producing bloody clashes with police and troops. Once this change was registered and acknowledged by the Economists, they were quick to abandon their rigid stage theory, their alleged subordination of politics "as a matter of principle". Their slogan now became - still tailing after events - "Lend the economic struggle a political character!".

Did this mean that Economism as such was now dead? Not at all. The switch from tailing after the spontaneous economic struggles to tailing after their resultant political struggles changed nothing fundamental about Economism. Least of all did the switch involve abandoning their defining opportunist nature, their "instinctive" gravitation toward "the line of least resistance", their characteristic adaptation to "the average worker as he was at the time".

Thus, Lenin concludes (and he seems to be arguing directly with his latest biographer [Cliff]):

"There is politics and politics. Thus, we see that Rabochaya Mysl does not so much deny the political struggle as it bows to its spontaneity, to its unconsciousness. While fully recognising the political struggle (better: the political desires and demands of the workers), which arises spontaneously from the working-class movement itself, it absolutely refuses independently to work out a specifically Social-Democratic politics corresponding to the general tasks of socialism and to present-day conditions in Russia."

The change in organisational form of the SWP in 1974 from a loose, semi-anarchist one to a "Leninist" one involved no change in its fundamentally opportunist relationship with the mass of the working class at all. They merely centralised their opportunism.

Pham Binh, Paul Le Blanc, Lars T Lih

Now let us comment on the clashes between Pham Binh, Paul Le Blanc, Lars T Lih etc in the pages of Weekly Worker and Links - International Journal of Socialist Renewal. It seems to us that these long academic debates are missing a crucial aspect of Lenin's development after 1905. Bruce Landau above seems to accept that by 1903 Lenin was basically sussed out on what to do and how to do it. Our theoreticians concentrate on the split of 1912 as a definitive turning point, or not, in his political evolution.

Of course Le Blanc, who is battling for the US ISO group now, a Cliffite organisation, must be supported against both Binh and Lih because he is advocating a form of 'Leninism' against the

Occupy Movementist Binh and the Kautskyite Lih. But we included the Landau piece to show this "Leninism" is the variety adopted by Cliff in the mid 1970s, it is merely a bureaucratic centralist opportunist type, i.e. not Leninism at all.

After 1903 and *What is to be done* the next single major theoretical work produced by Lenin was in 1908, *Materialism and Empirio Criticism*. Neither in the potted histories of Bolshevism produced by Dave Stockton and Stuart King of Workers Power or in the current debate of the three theoreticians of Leninism is there an evaluation of this work or its place in his political evolution, even by those who acknowledged that he did evolve and had to do so.

As we have proposed in IDOT no 3:

"Trotsky continually asserted that the Bolsheviks led the revolution in 1917 because they learned the lessons of 1905. We would assert that what the Bolsheviks learned from 1905 was:

1. The need for the United Front and transitional politics. In seeking to develop these the realisation developed this was the application of the dialectic and a new approach to the UF was needed.

2. The need to study and develop the dialectic itself to defend and develop dialectical and historical materialism against Mach and Bogdanov. Lenin began this work as early as 1906.

When the Bolsheviks were exposed as so tactically inept in 1905 they began to seek the roots of the problem. They had to look into their own soul. It was not against the Mensheviks that Lenin conducted the struggle to defend and develop Marxist philosophy but chiefly within the ranks of the Bolshevik party. Between 1906 and 1910 Lenin waged a major battle in defence of dialectical and historical materialism. He wrote *Materialism and Empirio Criticism* in 1908 and conducted the struggle against Bogdanov, basically in defence of Engels' elaboration of the dialectic. His Ten questions to a lecturer of 1908, for example, directs this defence from abroad against Bogdanov's followers within the party.

He consulted or studied over two hundred publications in preparation of this major work, visiting libraries in Geneva, Paris and London. He spent a whole month studying at the British Library because it contained works not to be



And the terrible consequences of the Stalinist, Anarchist and POUM opportunist popular frontist tail ending of the working class reformist consciousness in the Spanish Civil War.

had elsewhere. In 1914 to 1916 he conducted his major study of Hegel and the history of philosophy. This prepared him for the sharp turns and political struggles against the Bolshevik Central Committee who were succumbing to national chauvinism 'in defence of the revolution' when he arrived back from Switzerland in the sealed train in April 1917.

Though Lenin stressed that philosophy should never be a split question - and thus saved the revolutionary soul of the likes of Lunacharsky - nonetheless the 1908 struggle educated a new layer of Bolsheviks who became the front line leaders of the revolution in 1917."

Endnotes

[1] Lenin and the Bolshevik Party: A reply to Tony Cliff and the International Socialists (2002) By Bruce Landau, <http://links.org.au/node/2711>

[2] <http://marxistupdate.blogspot.co.uk/2012/02/lars-t-lih-on-pham-binh-tony-cliff.html>

[3] http://www.cpgb.org.uk/article.php?article_id=1004785

[4] <http://links.org.au/node/2832>

[5] <http://www.laborstandard.org/>

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Mumia's Death Sentence officially dropped

By Ailish Dease

Mumia Abu-Jamal is an African American Journalist, writer and former member of the Black Panther Party (BPP). He was framed for the murder of a police officer in 1981 in spite of overwhelming evidence that he was innocent. For example the prosecution claimed that only three people were at the scene, Mumia, his brother Billy Cook and the police officer. Physical evidence, blood samples show two different blood types were recovered from the scene, since Mumia, his brother Billy Cooke and the police Officer all had the same blood group, the presence of another blood group proves that at least one other person was there and got injured. Also someone else has confessed to shooting the officer.

Amnesty International said that Mumia's trial was "in violation of the minimum international standards for fair trials" (A Life in the Balance – The case off Mumia Abu Jamal- Feb, 2000)

A report by the National Academy of science in 2009 stated that the forensic evidence presented at the trial was unreliable and that potentially exculpatory evidence was not presented to the jury so this undermines the conviction.

Mumia was sentenced to death and has spent

30 years on Death Row in solitary confinement, twice his death warrant was signed but mass mobilizations across the globe stayed the executioner's hand. After 30 years of struggle Mumia is now off Death

Row and in the general prison population, after the Supreme Court in March 2012 deemed it unconstitutional for him to have been there. They have not however allowed him to have a new trial to present the evidence that the judge denied to the jury.

As a member of the BPP Mumia was subjected to the State's counterinsurgency programme COINTELPRO (see cointelpro101) which targeted political activists harassed them framed them and summarily executed them. COINTELPRO ultimately destroyed the BPP. FBI files released due to Freedom of Information requests shows that the FBI had Mumia under surveillance since he was 14 years old and joined the BPP. They tried to frame him in 1973



Archbishop Desmond Tutu Calls for Mumia Abu-Jamal's release, "Now that it is clear that Mumia should never have been on death row in the first place, justice will not be served by relegating him to prison for the rest of his life—yet another form of death sentence. Based on even a minimal following of international human rights standards, Mumia must now be released. I therefore join the call, and ask others to follow, asking District Attorney Seth Williams to rise to the challenge of reconciliation, human rights, and justice: drop this case now, and allow Mumia Abu-Jamal to be immediately released, with full time served."

for the murders of the governor of Bermuda and his assistant. Mumia had never been to Bermuda so the state had to drop this.

Of course the state does not want a new trial because they are afraid of the TRUTH.

A new trial would expose the brutal reality of capitalist "justice" and show clearly how the judicial system perpetuates racist oppression and exploitation.

The struggle continues for his unconditional release from prison.

Free Mumia!

Free All Political Prisoners!

The two remaining political prisoners from the Angola 3 had spent 40 years in solitary confinement on 12 April 2012

Woodfox and Wallace were convicted in 1972 of the murder of Angola prison guard Brent Miller. They have always maintained that they



Delegation returns from delivering petitions to Gov. Jindal's office at the State Capitol in Baton Rouge, April 17.

We've now sent your names across to our colleagues at Amnesty USA. They will hand the global petition in to Louisiana State Governor, Bobby Jindal, on 17 April 2012 which marks 40 years since Albert Woodfox and Herman Wallace were first placed in solitary confinement.

Albert Woodfox and Herman Wallace entered Louisiana State Penitentiary in Angola, USA, in their twenties. Now in their sixties, the men both suffer from various physical and mental health problems caused or exacerbated by spending their years in solitary confinement (including osteoarthritis, heart disease, diabetes, memory loss, claustrophobia, anxiety and insomnia) in cells that measure 2x3 metres, where they are locked for 23 hours of every day. Despite more than 150 reviews of Woodfox and Wallace's confinement, the Louisiana prison has breached its own policies for over 15 years to keep the men in solitary confinement – indefinitely.

did not kill Miller: no physical evidence links them to the murder. On top of this, testimonies from other inmates convicting the two were taken under dubious circumstances, and one witness later retracted his testimony. Woodfox's conviction has been overturned twice, with judges citing racial discrimination, misconduct by the prosecution, inadequate defence and the suppression of exculpatory evidence.

Woodfox and Wallace believe their isolation (along with a third man, Robert King, incarcerated for separate crimes) was because of their political activism, and membership of the Black Panther Party. Collectively, Woodfox, Wallace and King are known as the Angola 3. King was released after 29 years of solitary confinement in 2011. The three men continue to campaign for justice, and recognition of the cruelty and illegality of their treatment in solitary confinement. You can read more about the Angola 3 in our 2011 report on their case.

Follow the campaign on,
<http://angola3news.blogspot.co.uk/>

Amnesty International reports:

As of Thursday 12 April, nearly 65,000 people worldwide had added their names to Amnesty's worldwide petition calling for justice for Albert Woodfox and Herman Wallace, including over 11,000 in the UK.

The Greek Elections of May 2012 By Savas Michael-Matsas, EEK Greece

The popular wrath against the barbaric austerity imposed on Greece by the EU, the European Central Bank and the IMF has exploded in the early parliamentary elections of May 6th leading into a crushing and humiliating defeat both the ruling bourgeois parties, the right wing New Democracy (ND) and the “socialist” PASOK, as well as all the neo-liberal servers of the troika’s Memorandum. The two parties that ruled the countries for decades after the fall of the military dictatorship in 1974, ND and PASOK, have fallen into a pathetic minority, combining together less than a third of the votes. For the first time after more than a half century, a party of the Left, the reformist SYRIZA with his radical anti-Memorandum rhetoric and movementist look, has been catapulted in the second rank, nationally, becoming the Official Opposition in the country and the biggest party in Athens, the capital region, Thessalonica, and the main cities in the provinces. There is an obvious left wing turn of the majority of the people.

Unfortunately, social misery, polarization of inequalities, and national humiliation-not to mention the political blindness and electoralist complaisance of the reformist, Stalinist, and centrist Left- became also a fertile field for far right nationalist demagoguery leading to a spectacular growth not just of the far right “Independent Greeks” (a split from the ND) but above all of the openly neo-Nazi party of the “Golden Dawn”, which jumped from a few thousands votes in 2009 into nearly a half a million in 2012, entering for the first time in Parliament.

In general, apart from the electoral triumph of SYRIZA, there was a relative increase of the vote for most of the parties of the Left. The Stalinist KKE, although winning a few thousands more votes, lost its hegemonic primacy among the parties of the Left, and it has fallen from the third rank that traditionally it occupied among all the parliamentary parties to the fifth rank. The biggest losses for the KKE were in the proletarian areas in the Athens region and in Thessalonica.

First, the Stalinists paid the price for their crude sectarianism and vulgar hostility against every other left wing force and against every social movement and popular rebellion that they cannot put under their bureaucratic control (for example they have denounced the December 2008 revolt as a CIA conspiracy; they played the role of the police guarding the parliament from the popular anger in the October 2011 General Strike; they separated their forces from the major rally of a million people protesting against the second Memorandum in Syntagma Square in Athens, on February 12, 2012 etc.)

But there is another, very important reason for their defeat in relation to SYRIZA. In defaulted Greece, the

regime crisis has put on the agenda urgently the question of power. The KKE advanced vaguely the slogan for a “workers’ popular power” and “socialization of the monopolies” but as a remote possibility in the far away future, “because, now, the objective conditions and relationship of forces are not yet mature”, as the Stalinists claim. On the contrary, SYRIZA has raised the immediate need for “a government of the Left” (although without a revolutionary overthrow of the bourgeois regime and State). The slogan for “a left government” had received a great popular response, despite its vagueness and covering up of the class nature of the State power (Tsipras, the young leader of SYRIZA, even mentioned as an example to follow the tragic precedent of the Allende government in Chile, defending also the Popular Front line of the Comintern in the 1930s). Nevertheless, as previously with the demand for a direct democracy regime during the occupying the squares movement in 2011, the popular response to the prospect of a government of the Left does not reflect only a dangerous illusion but also the ripening of the subjective conditions in the mass social consciousness for an alternative power of those from below against those ruling from above. It is a contradictory, distorted reflection of the immediate need for a struggle for working class power.

The Trotskyist EEK, while criticizing sharply the popular front line in the “left government” slogan and pointing out the dangers, precisely from the tragic precedents in Spain, Chile and Greece, insisted on the urgent need for a revolutionary socialist way out from the capitalist crisis, with the overthrow of the capitalist regime and the establishment of a revolutionary workers government and workers power, as a step towards a United Socialist States of Europe to be built on the ruins of the imperialist EU. Our Party increased modestly its vote in every electoral district all over the country, particularly in the proletarian areas of the capital and of the main cities; but more importantly it developed further its political influence and organization among advanced workers and youth.

The Maoists of the KKE ml and of the ML-KKE, although they joined this time after decades their forces in a common bloc, they received less votes than the sum of the votes of both parties in previous elections. The moderation of their political program, restricted just to a defence against the austerity attacks and in defence of national independence, failed to arise much of response in a social milieu very radicalized the last two years.

ANTARSYA, the “broad anti-capitalist Front” of ten centrist organizations, increased its vote in relation to the previous 2009 parliamentary elections but retreated nationally in relation to the 2010 regional



elections, falling from above 2 per cent to just above 1 per cent. As the leaders of ANTARSYA have cultivated the most wild illusions about their “certain entry into parliament with eight anti-capitalist deputies”, campaigning against their competitors in the far left, presenting as “a lost vote” any vote to the EEK, following the worst traditions of electoralism, now they are deeply disappointed from the results, plunging again in crisis. Some of the organizations of this anti-capitalist Front are already looking towards SYRIZA, while others, particularly in NAR (New Left Current) speak about their “deficit in strategy and program” as the reason of the defeat of their electoral expectations. This “deficit” was already pointed out by the EEK: ANTARSYA and NAR call for the overthrow of the bourgeois government but they find “immature” the conditions to advance a call for workers power; it calls (as the EEK does) for an withdraw from the EU and the euro but it returns to national isolation by rejecting the alternative advanced by the EEK for a revolutionary struggle for the socialist unification of Europe. More than 20 years after their split from the KKE, the NAR remains prisoner of the Stalinist legacy, particularly in relation to the Popular Front and the nationalist outlook.

It is noteworthy that most of the central strategic problems that counter-posed Trotskyism and Stalinism in the 20th century- permanent revolution versus socialism in a single country, united workers front versus popular front of class collaboration, the struggle against fascism, the decline of bourgeois democracy and the dictatorship of the proletariat, the need for a revolutionary International, the question of the State, the dangers from bureaucracy etc.- have found now urgent actuality in Greece and they are discussed among the most militant sectors.

As it becomes extremely difficult even the formation of a coalition government in Greece now, and eventually new elections very soon could not solve the problem of power, the political crisis is escalating in the country and all over Europe. The questions of revolutionary strategy and tactics, of a program for the systematic mobilization of the masses in preparation for the seizure of power by the working class supported by the pauperized masses, of organization of the revolutionary vanguard are more urgent than ever.

Socialist Fight Comment on this: In the maelstrom of political confusion that is the Greek left Alexis Tsipras, leader Synaspismos and of SYRIZA now emerges as the central figure. The historical figure that Tsipras reminds us of is Largo Caballero, the Spanish left wing socialist leader of the 1920s and 30s, who assisted the Stalinist to betray that great revolutionary struggle.

This election shows a swing to the left but no real revolutionary perspectives. All serious revolutionaries in Greece must now turn to the mass base of this movement and to its youth in particular, not capitulating to its leadership but politically attacking their betrayals and exposing their lies and making solidarity united front pacts with them in action where they are forced to fight the class

struggle. Trotskyists must seek to enter the youth movements, the KKE’s Communist Youth Movement in particular (if safe to do so), just as Trotsky advised the POUM and Andras Nin to enter the PSOE youth in the early 30s.

Trotskyists must unyielding oppose the popular frontism of anti-austerity, insisting on class struggle methods of fighting this, never entering or

Leon Trotsky: I am confident of the victory of the Fourth International; Go Forward!

supporting 'anti-austerity' coalitions which includes bourgeois elements which must reject the overthrow of capitalism. The way that Workers Power condemns the KKE's sectarianism is a capitulation to popular frontism,

"In such conditions, the KKE's policy, refusing to form a coalition with the other left parties on the grounds that it would be a bourgeois government, is a massive obstacle to keeping out the pro-austerity right and centre right parties".

But it would be a bourgeois and so a popular front government. The fact that popular frontism is opposed by Stalinist third periodism is neither here nor there. For Trotskyists the answer to the third period was the Leninist tactic of the working class united front, not the Stalinist rightist popular front with liberals and bishops against fascism (or austerity today).

The EEK participated in the election independently, not a part of Antarsya. They got a very small vote, but they have many trade union militant cadre who engage in struggle with the Stalinists ESAK/PAME. The EEK were adherents of the old British WRP's International Committee and still show most of their strengths and weaknesses. Today they are the Greek section of the Coordinating Committee for the Refoundation of the Fourth International who took such a bad position on Libya. On strengths some of the statements they make here are excellent, however,

"The Trotskyist EEK, while criticizing sharply the popular front line in the 'left government' slogan

and pointing out the dangers, precisely from the tragic precedents in Spain, Chile and Greece, insisted on the urgent need for a revolutionary socialist way out from the capitalist crisis, with the overthrow of the capitalist regime and the establishment of a revolutionary workers government and workers power, as a step towards a United Socialist States of Europe to be build on the ruins of the imperialist EU."

No to EU/Euro is a problematic slogan of the EEK. Would the Drachma and isolation be better? But it is a long way from the backward sectarianism of the WSW/SEP of David North, (they were member of the ICFI with him until the Explosion of the WRP in 1985) who farcically said in 2010,

"In times of crisis, the Greek bourgeoisie has repeatedly resorted to social democratic governments supported by the trade unions to safeguard its interests. Today, the Greek debt crisis has revealed PASOK to be nothing more than an instrument of the global financial institutions and the European Union. The unions are the most steadfast defenders of the profit system (Note: not the TU bureaucracy! SF). On the basis of their nationalist perspective, they demand that the working class make "sacrifices"—meaning the destruction of all previously won social gains."

But there is still no elaboration of the programme of the United Front. They make no calls for a rank and file movement in the trade unions to fight the treachery of the bureaucracy, surely the only way to put revolutionary propaganda into practice. They do not participate in Antarsya on the basis

of a fight for revolutionary leadership. In particular there is no estimation of how to intervene in the EEK or its youth, the Communist Youth Movement. We know they have the politics to fight for the revolution. But they lack the method.

The WRP's fake All Trade Union Alliance covered for its lack of consistent TU work by its adulation of left bureaucrats at their bogus 'conferences'. Thus they hid the fact that they only opposed the bureaucracy with propaganda. The objectively developing crisis was supposed to propel the ranks of the working class into the WRP and a fiery speech from Healy or Banda would win the leadership of the masses and so the revolution.

No, it needs actual organisation in the trade unions as Trotsky and the SWP fought for in Minneapolis in the 1930s Teamsters. As the Transitional Programme says in such contrast to the WSW:

"Therefore, the sections of the Fourth International should always strive not only to renew the top leadership of the trade unions, boldly and resolutely in critical moments advancing new militant leaders in place of routine functionaries and careerists, but also to create in all possible instances independent militant organizations corresponding more closely to the tasks of mass struggle against bourgeois society; and, if necessary, not flinching even in the face of a direct break with the conservative apparatus of the trade unions."

Clearly Trotsky calling here for rank-and-file-type movements.

Free Salameh Kaileh and all socialist and working class militants, no support to the Syrian counter-revolution led by the Free Syrian Army and Imperialism

This Syrian Socialist, Salameh Kaileh, is now incarcerated by the Assad regime and we should demand his release and that of all socialist and working class militants held by the regime. However we should not sign a blanket demand for the release of 'all other political prisoners'; We will not demand the release of outright pro-imperialist stooges and CIA assets. Nor could we go along with "Everyone who supports freedom and justice for the Syrian people" – freedom for whom to do what? As in Libya this will resolve into freedom for finance capital to penetrate that economy at will and will come down to the freedom of the rich to prosper and the poor to starve, as Imperialism is imposing everywhere else it the world where it has unrestricted access via totally plain regimes. Assad is anti-imperialist NOW to the extent that he is now in a war with Imperialism and its domestic agents.

Because finance capital cannot penetrate Syria or Iran at will there is therefore an obligation on Marxists to defend these states against Imperialist assaults and internal machinations, aimed at securing control over these economies and their resources, oil in the first place, and securing a geopolitical base to fully control the recourses of both the Gulf and the Caspian sea. Salameh Kaileh does not say that this, the most likely outcome if Imperialism and 'the opposition'

succeed in overthrowing Assad, has to be opposed. Like with the fall of the Berlin Wall there is an almost criminal disregard as to which way this regime will fall, to the left and the working class and therefore to a socialist revolution or to the right and an even more vicious dictator only this time a complete stooge of Imperialism, as we now have in Libya. It is true that the regime here imposed neo-liberal capitalist policies, as does Iran, none of the 'welfare capitalism' that was seen in Nasser's Egypt, or Libya or Iraq.

Saying Assad is not really anti-imperialist is, of course correct in the abstract just as the Ahm-jinedad regime in Teheran is not, but to the extent that they are obliged to fight Imperialism now, albeit in their own interests, they have to be critically supported against Imperialism. Replace Brazil with Syria and Chiang Kai-shek with Assad here and the line of march is obvious.

"But Chiang Kai-shek? We need have no illusions about Chiang Kai-shek, his party, or the whole ruling class of China, just as Marx and Engels had no illusions about the ruling classes of Ireland and Poland. Chiang Kai-shek is the executioner of the Chinese workers and peasants. But today he is forced, despite himself, to struggle against Japan for the remainder of the independence of China. Tomorrow he may again betray. It is possible. It is probable. It is even inevitable. But today he is struggling. Only cowards, scoun-



Salameh Kaileh, no mention of Libya or the outcome

drels, or complete imbeciles can refuse to participate in that struggle." Leon Trotsky, On the Sino-Japanese War 1937, <http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1937/10/sino.htm>

We are conscious that Salameh Kaileh makes no demands for an anti-imperialist UNITED front against global imperialism. He equates the regime with imperialism as if there were no conflict at all between the interests of a national bourgeoisie and global finance capital. Significantly he makes no mention of Libya or the outcome there. **Marxists must identify the main enemy, it is world Imperialism not Assad.**

Leon Trotsky: I am confident of the victory of the Fourth International; Go Forward!

Burma: Imperialism's plaything

By Ailish Dease

Imperialism

Burma has a long and complex history. It is one of the most ethnically diverse countries in the world due to its strategic geographic position between the borders of India, China, Laos and Thailand. Ethnic minorities make up about a third of the population and occupy half of the country. Over a hundred different dialects and languages have been identified in Burma although the Constitution only acknowledges seven ethnic minority states, Chin, Kachin, Karen, Kayah, Mon, Rakhine (or Arakan) and Shan. The present government refers to the '135 national races' of Burma.

The renaming of 'Burma' as 'Myanmar' in June 1989 is not yet standard international usage. This is because 'Myanmar' is rejected by many ethnic minority parties as the historic ethnic 'Burman' name for their country. In English 'Burman' is used to refer to the majority ethnic group and 'Burmese' to citizenship or language. So, someone can be an ethnic Mon or Chin but at the same time be a Burmese citizen.

The ethnic minority crisis is one of the most important issues facing Burma. All the regions along Burma's land borders are inhabited by ethnic minorities, often with historic ties to neighbouring states. Historically there was conflict between those ethnic groups in the hills which practiced slash and burn agriculture and those on the plains which practiced wet rice farming. Political power changed hands frequently but in spite of these conflicts there was inter-ethnic tolerance and many communities were multi ethnic. These multi ethnic communities were subverted by British colonialism divide and rule strategy. Having fought three Anglo Burmese wars in 1824-26, 1852, and 1885-86, over a period of 60 years the British annexed Burma in 1886.

They divided the country between the 'Ministerial administration' of the Burman majority and the 'Frontier' areas of the minorities, this set up a division in their political and economic development. (1)

The British destroyed the system of monarchy in Ministerial Burma and until 1937 Burma was ruled as a province of India. The ethnic minority areas were left largely under the control of the traditional chiefs. Burmese armed insurrection continued for many years and the British responded with savage brutality. The British were the first colonisers to use the strategy of burning villages suspected of aiding insurgents and then dispersing the people. With a rise in demand for rice new areas were opened up for cultivation, to prepare the land the local farmers had to borrow money from Indian moneylenders at exorbitant interest rates and were often foreclosed on and evicted losing everything. Most of the jobs also went to

indentured Indian labourers; understandably the Burman majority resented this. The recruitment of some ethnic minority groups into the colonial army was also another bone of contention. The frontier regions suffered economic neglect while the British concentrated on developing the Ministerial areas in terms of Petroleum and timber and the production of rice. They also invested in some infrastructure. (1)

During the 1920s and 1930s workers, students and Buddhist monks from the Burman majority protested against British Rule. Inter ethnic relations deteriorated due to WW2. The minority peoples remained loyal to the British while the national liberation movement led by Aung San (father of Suu Kyi) initially sided with the Japanese. This led to horrific communal violence and the minorities suffered terribly.

In 1948 Burma gained its independence from Britain

The ethnic minority groups were not represented in the first independent government. This was rectified but by then many minority parties were boycotting the political process. (2) The CPB (Communist Party of Burma) went underground in March 1948 and throughout the 40s and 50s many minority groups took up arms in the countryside.

A coup in 1962 brought an end to the multi ethnic parliamentary democracy, hundreds of political activists were imprisoned without trial. After peace talks failed in 1963-64 the government claimed they were on "the Burmese Way to Socialism". This entailed a counterinsurgency programme in the countryside while attempting to build a centralised one party state in the capital. Many atrocities were committed during this period. It was common for nationalist leaders of that period to pretend to have "socialist" policies in order to gain support from the masses. The junta suppressed the opposition including the Communist Party of Burma and the ethnic parties.

In 1967 there was an anti-Chinese riot in the capital Rangoon so the Chinese government backed the CPB to invade the Shan state from China. This was one of a few hiccups in the relationship between the Burmese military Junta and the Chinese government. (3) Against continued resistance in January 1974 the new constitution abolished the right to secession for the national minorities. There were widespread protests for several years, but the military were able to suppress them easily. The 1988 uprising saw about 20 insurgent



British attack in Burma 1824, Having fought three Anglo Burmese wars in 1824-26, 1852, and 1885-86, over a period of 60 years the British annexed Burma in 1886.

forces still active and administering their own areas, so thousands of students and activists were able to seek sanctuary in the Frontier zones after the uprising was crushed.

It was after the violent suppression of the 1988 uprising that the West imposed investment sanctions on Burma. The importance of Burma's location has not been lost on the imperialist powers, particularly the US which has now started realigning its policy over South East Asia and has now decided to make efforts to end the sanctions imposed in 1988 mainly to exploit the oil/gas, gems and other natural resources there but also to undermine Burma's ties with China.

In 1988 the Military wrote into the constitution a provision to ensure their continued power that twenty five percent of the seats in the upper and lower parliaments must be reserved for military officers even *before* elections. The way the elections were organised in 2010 ensured victory for the military Junta's party the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP). The electoral laws forbade any party whose members had criminal convictions. The NLD (National League for Democracy) and other opposition parties boycotted the elections. Military rule could not continue indefinitely so in March 2011 the military handed over to a "civilian" government (military-backed).

This "civilian" government has no power to control the military and, according to the constitution, the military leadership will appoint defence, interior and border ministries and can sack the government if there is a threat to "stability". So the election was a bid to continue their rule with a "legitimate" civilian façade. The West has demanded political reform as a pre condition for the lifting of sanctions. On the 12th January the civilian government signed a ceasefire agreement with the KNU (Karen National Union) after sixty years of armed resistance.

Most ethnic minority political parties, (or factions within them) which first took up arms to demand the complete secession of their territories have

now cut deals with the authorities and entered into ceasefire agreements. The conflict in Kachin state continues however. This ceasefire agreement fulfils one of the demands made by the West in order for sanctions to be lifted. "Peace" talks continue.

In a bid to get sanctions lifted it has released hundreds of political prisoners and has allowed trade unions and also relaxed media censorship. Further Burma has been elected to be ASEAN chair for 2014.

The bye election in Burma on the 1st April 2012 was only for 45 seats, it allowed people to show their hatred of the Military Junta voting for the NLD (National League for Democracy) and other opposition parties. The opposition to the regime is deeply divided however. The General Secretary of the NEPP (New Era People's Party) one of the parties to emerge out of the so-called Trotskyist Red Flag Communist Party (a branch of the Burma Communist Party) has said that the Party "will try capitalism for the full development of the nation's market economy".

The election was really a smokescreen to help the West to pretend that there is progress towards democracy so that they can exploit the natural resources and use the people for cheap labour while undermining the Chinese in the process. China is involved in over 62, hydro, oil, gas and mining projects in Burma. For strategic and geo political reasons the US is concerned about the implications for its interests in the region.

China has provided Burma with diplomatic support with its veto in the UN and support for Burma's brutal anti democratic policies after the 1988 uprising. Burma also needs China's support to end the armed conflict with the ethnic insur-

gents on the Chinese border. China is unpopular especially in the ethnic controlled areas because the local ethnic minorities have not benefitted from the Chinese ventures, as China brings its own labour instead of employing locals. Local people are displaced without compensation.

Suu Kyi, leader of the NLD was born to privilege as daughter of General Ang. She was educated at the University of Oxford in England and is part of the Burmese bourgeoisie. When there were mass strikes and protests in 1988 against the Military Junta's despotic rule Suu Kyi became involved and soon became leader of the opposition NLD (National League For Democracy) travelling around the country calling for democratic reform. She was soon placed under house arrest and was not allowed to see her children or her husband who died in 1999. She was also banned from standing in the election. During the 1988 uprising, she played a key role in demobilizing the movement and called off the strikes in return for a promise from the army that they would allow an election. In 1990 the NLD won the election but the military ignored the result.

A century of colonial domination is the primary reason for Burma's economic and social underdevelopment. The NLD wants to open Burma for foreign investment but the working poor will be no better off since the NLD does not have a socialist programme. The NLD is however more sympathetic to western economic interests. The pro-market restructuring and privatizations which the IMF/WB is demanding will lead to the dismantling of the state-owned sector and this will produce job losses as well as an erosion of conditions and pay. The only way for the people of Burma to progress is through a socialist workers party. (4)



Aung San Suu Kyi (3rd L) addresses supporters during an electoral campaign rally on the outskirts of Rangoon, March 2012

There has been a huge increase in Land confiscation due to foreign investment, many poor farmers have had their land taken without any compensation. Foreign investment projects bring money into the country but it is siphoned off to expand the military.

The west does not care about democracy and human rights for the people of Burma, all they desire is a "stable" political situation for them to go about exploiting the working class. They only care about making profits. Only by mass struggle can the aspirations of the people be realised.

Endnotes

1. Thant Myint-U (2001). *The Making of Modern Burma*. Cambridge University Press
2. Webster, Anthony (1998). *Gentlemen Capitalists: British Imperialism in South East Asia, 1770-1890*.
3. CIA Intelligence Report 1971- Peking and The Burmese Communists, The Perils and the Profits of Insurgency
4. IMF Report on Burma -www.imf.org/external/country/mmr/index.htm

Malvinas from p. 13 military potential of the country, in a logistical problem (Could Argentina win the war?, site of PO, 3/12/2012. Even from the military point of view, this analysis is stupid because though the regular Argentinean strength had contained the first imperialist attack, with their scanty technology and semi-colonial resources they would not repel a second big imperialist intervention coordinated by the Anglo-Saxon block.

For Marxists, Galtieri and the Junta were defeated by their class limits, so were more recently the Taliban, Saddam Hussein, Gaddafi, and as probably Assad and Ahmadinejad will be defeated. Conversely victory could be obtained from an effort of the working class in the global arena, with the active and broad solidarity of oppressed peoples of Latin America, by the arming of the entire Argentine people combined with military support from the USSR for Argentina, which in those days was an important trading partner of the Soviet Union. These could have been the main levers for the victory of the oppressed country.

The Argentine PO and LIT claimed to be in the military camp of the Argentinean dictatorship against imperialism in the war of the Malvinas. But, now, in Libya and Syria, on behalf of the campaign to combat dictatorship they have joined the propaganda for imperialist war, they

use the imperialist mantra of the "Arab spring" against today's oppressed nations under attack. These parties demonstrate that your anti-imperialism is Latin American nationalism or patriotism; a "feeling" that even being progressive, because it is the nationalism of oppressed nation, has nothing to do with the anti-imperialism and anti-colonialism of Marx, Lenin and Trotsky.

Revisionist currents LCI, CMI, CWI, and Lambertism, originating from England, from the USA and from France took a defeatist, third-campist position that objectively serves their own bourgeoisie against the oppressed nation. These parties followed their imperialist bourgeoisie themselves, under the fallacious justification of supporting the "Self-determination of the Kelpers", "to fight the diversionary manoeuvres of the bloodthirsty Argentinean dictatorship", or because supposedly "Argentinean sovereignty was not in question".

For the Trotskyists, the only principled position should be to struggle for the defeat of imperialism, no confidence in the military junta, for the arming of the whole people, expropriation of the imperialist capital in Argentina, of the bank of London and the renunciation of the whole Argentinean foreign debt with England. Today, the government of CFK, which with her "diplomatic" tactics is objectively more servile and impotent than Galtieri was, while the impe-

rialism advance their colonisation of the South Atlantic and Antarctica from the Malvinas. Revolutionaries support the current dynamic of anti-imperialist struggles for the Malvinas and in Haiti, Libya, Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan.

We should fight with all our political strength for a united front with those who are unequivocally for the expulsion of the imperialism.

Simultaneously also we must denounce the collaborationism of the semi-colonial bourgeois governments that pave the way for the recolonisation, and even more so the Governments who have become agents of the military invasion of other people as in the case of Haiti, where the Bolivarian national Governments are participating in populist or populist front with invading troops of the UN, or in the case of Libya, invaded with the help of troops from Qatar and United Arab Emirates. In this struggle, the revolutionaries do not feed any illusion in his bourgeois allies and claim the internationalist unity with the world working class for the defeat of the imperialist pirates in the whole globe.

Liga Comunista do Brazil,

Tendencia Militante Bolchevique de Argentina,

Socialist Fight of Britain.

Women's oppression and the semi-colonial world; the Imperialist infantilisation of Afghan, Asian and African women

Women's oppression and Imperialism

LCFI Statement on International Women's Day 8 March 2012.

On 5 June 2011 a TrustLaw (an international legal collective) poll found Afghanistan to be the most dangerous country in the world for women to live in. It was followed by the Congo "plagued by rape as weapon of war", Pakistan "blighted by acid attacks and 'honour killings'", India "trafficking and sexual slavery" and Somali, "seen as having full gamut of risks" – e.g. 98% of women suffer some form of genital mutilation. Somali women's minister Maryan Qasim told TrustLaw, "The most dangerous thing a woman in Somalia can do is to become pregnant. When a woman becomes pregnant her life is 50-50 because there is no antenatal care at all. There are no hospitals, no healthcare, no nothing." [1]

It is the common misconception that all of this is due to the backward, barbaric cultures of these regions and the United Nations is doing the best job possible in combating this appalling treatment of women, much of it down to Islamic fundamentalism and/or Hindu chauvinism.

However Sylvia Tamale, a Ugandan legal scholar, says about female genital mutilation (FGM) that some African feminists object to what she calls the imperialist infantilisation of African women, and they reject the idea that FGM is nothing but a barbaric rejection of modernity. Tamale suggests that there are cultural and political aspects to the practice's continuation that make opposition to it a complex issue. [2]

We affirm that the oppression of women has its origins in the overthrow of the mother right and the development of class society through the establishment of private property. Today it is a direct product of global Imperialism and the rapacious hunt for profit of international finance capital. As William Blum says in the introduction to his book *Killing Hope*,

"Post-cold war, New-World-Order time, it looks good for the M-I-I-C [3] and their global partners in crime, the World Bank and the IMF. They've got their NAFTA and their GATT World Trade Organization. They're dictating economic, political and social development all over the Third World and Eastern Europe. Moscow's reaction to events anywhere is no longer a restraining consideration."

The UN's Code of Conduct on Transnational Corporations, 15 years in the making, is dead.



Clara Zetkin (1857 – 1933) was a German Marxist theorist, activist, and fighter for women's rights. In 1911, she organized the

Everything in sight is being deregulated and privatized. Capital prowls the globe with a ravenous freedom it hasn't enjoyed since before World War I, operating free of friction, free of gravity. The world has been made safe for the transnational corporation." [4]

Women's 'rights' are advancing in inverse proportion to the impoverishment and increased oppression of working class women in the advanced metropolitan countries and the absolute degradation and humiliation of women on the semi-colonies world as outlined by this TrustLaw survey.

The secret of women's oppression in Afghanistan

Therefore the simple solution is to overthrow capitalism world-wide and impose equality and all will be well, it seems at first glance. However if we look at the terrible position of women in Afghanistan today we see we must propose a far more serious revolutionary programme. And here we have to go back to see how the new revolutionary Soviet regime dealt with these problems in the short few years before Stalinisation imposed its brutal methods of suppression that contained for a few decades but could never eliminate backward fundamentalist reaction.

The secret of women's oppression in Afghanistan, for instance, lies in the material conditions of rural life. After the 'Glorious Saur Revolution' in April 1978 the Peoples Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) attempted to impose the 'revolution' from above in such a bureaucratic,

heavy handed fashion that it stood no chance. They rode rough-shod over tribal customs and religious sensitivities and prejudices alike. For examples they granted land to the landless peasants without the provision of bank credit to fertilise it or buy seed. In consequence the peasants were forced back to the very landlords who had been expropriated when it was presented to the peasants by the 'revolution' in the first place. In many cases they had to accept the most humiliating terms and punishments from these reactionaries, including self-mutilations, for their 'anti-Islamic actions' [5]

But on the women question their terrible bureaucratic methods opened the door for today's appalling situation. The PDPA failed to conduct any preparatory campaign against all the other reactionary customs like women's oppression, e.g., the selling of daughters in forced marriages - the Kalym (bride price) -, etc. They issued 'binding' decrees but did not provide any viable alternative. They naturally did not expropriate the landowners by mobilising the peasants.

Early Bolshevik Work among Women of the Soviet East

Dale Ross (D. L. Reissner), the first editor of the SL's (Spartacist League, James Robertson's US split from the SWP in 1963) 'Women and Revolution', explained that method and history well in her article 'Early Bolshevik Work among Women of the Soviet East' (Issue No. 12 Summer 1976). She goes into great detail to explain the difference between the Bolshevik method of approaching this work and both the Menshevik and Stalinist method. In the period when the Mensheviks held control in the Caucasus region they pioneered the methods of brutal imposition of "progress" which Stalinism later adopted, which stood in such contrast to authentic Bolshevik methods. The Zhenotdel, the Bolshevik organisation of revolutionary women, did the best work here in the years of revolution between the end of the Civil War in 1920 and the beginnings of the Stalinisation of the party in 1924. There is no need to ask which method the PDPA and the 'Red Army' operated in Afghanistan. Or which method the ICL supported so uncritically after the 1979 Soviet invasion.

The following quotes from that article stand in total repudiation to the ICL's posturing Stalinophilia in Afghanistan. Note in particular the great detail given of the sensitivity of approach of the revolutionary Bolsheviks to local custom and law, in total contrast to the Menshevik and Stalinist methods. This also must be the method of approach on the question of female genital mutilation discussed below.

The revolutionary women of the Zhenotdel faced horrible death in the early 1920s by don-



ning the paranja (a garment that totally covered women's faces without even openings for eyes and mouth) to get the ear of the oppressed women. The 'Red Army' rained napalm on them in the 1980s. This account highlights, better than any other analytic article we have seen, the practical application of the transitional method in such circumstances:

"The Bolsheviks viewed the extreme oppression of women as an indicator of the primitive level of the whole society, but their approach was based on materialism, not moralism. They understood that the fact that women were veiled and caged, bought and sold, was but the surface of the problem. Kalym was not some sinister plot against womankind, but the institution which was central to the organisation of production, integrally connected to land and water rights.

Payment of Kalym, often by the whole clan over a long period of time, committed those involved to an elaborate system of debt, duties and loyalties which ultimately led to participation in the private armies of the local beys (landowners and wholesale merchants). All commitments were thus backed up with the threat of feuds and blood vengeance.

"... Lenin warned against prematurely confronting respected native institutions, even when these clearly violated communist principles and Soviet law. Instead he proposed to use the Soviet state power to systematically undermine them while simultaneously demonstrating the superiority of Soviet institutions, a policy which had worked well against the powerful Russian Orthodox Church."

"But at the January 1924 Party conference, which preceded the 13th Party congress, the leadership, programme and methods of the party changed decisively. In an ominous prelude to the policies of the 'third period' such as the forced collectivisation of agriculture, the legal offensive against traditional practices in Central Asia was stepped up until the divorce rate assumed epidemic proportions

'...Then on 8 March 1927, in celebration of International Woman's Day, mass meetings were held at which thousands of frenzied participants, chanting 'down with the paranja!' tore off their veils which were drenched in paraffin and burned. Poems were recited and plays with names such as 'Away with the Veil' and 'Never again Kalym' were performed. Zhenotdel agitators led marches of unveiled women through the streets, instigating the forced desegregation of public quarters and sanctified religious sites'

Brutal Stalinist methods

The consequences of these brutal Stalinist methods were the same in 1927, 28 and 29 as they were in Afghanistan sixty years later:

'Women suing for divorce became the targets of murderous vigilante squads, and lynchings of party cadres annihilated the ranks of the Zhenotdel. The Party was forced to mobilise the militia, then the Komsomolsk and finally the general party membership and the Red Army to protect the women, but it refused to alter its suicidal policies. The debacle of International Woman's Day was repeated in 1928 and 1929 with the same disastrous consequences, exacting an extremely high toll on party cadre.'

The best results against fundamentalism were achieved by women revolutionaries of the Zhenotdel using the transitional method of Bolshevism, as Dale Ross describes. The Afghan 1978 coupists were no revolutionaries, had no knowledge of and did not want to know about the methods of Marxist revolutionaries. They feared the consequences of utilising such tactics and were utterly opposed to them. They preferred their own bureaucratic 'suicidal policies', as Dale Ross says above.

The Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA) have this observation to make on the role of US Imperialism in Afghanistan,

"It is hard to fathom the pivotal role the United States played in nourishing a violent, fundamentalist mentality in generations of young Afghans. But starting in the 1980s, the U.S. government spent more than \$50 million to publish textbooks through the University of Nebraska that promoted a fanatic, militaristic agenda. In a March 2002 article, the Washington Post called it the "Jihad Schoolbook Scandal," describing the books as "filled with talk of jihad" and warlike images. It taught children to count using "illustrations of tanks, missiles and landmines."

The books were shipped into Soviet-occupied Afghanistan to fuel a jihad against the Soviets, but, according to the Post, they made up the core curriculum in the Afghan school system long after the Soviets had been defeated. "Even the Taliban used the American-produced books, though the radical movement scratched out human faces in keeping with its strict fundamentalist code." And after the Taliban was gone, USAID continued to send the textbooks into Afghanistan, where fundamentalists still use them to teach a violent brand of Islam."

Despite disagreements with the RAWA this highlights the role of Imperialism in promoting Islamic fundamentalism whenever it is in their interests, be it in Afghanistan in the early 1980s or in Libya and Syria in 2011-12.

Female genital mutilation

The United Nations have conducted a long campaign against female genital mutilation but, of course, defends the global social order that

ensure its continuation. Here they explain the outlook of the men who demand its implementation;

"Genital cutting is seen as a way of ensuring that a woman is clean, chaste, and ready for marriage; uncut women are associated with promiscuity and lack of social respectability. Deadening the woman's sexual pleasure is a way of guaranteeing her virginity and fidelity. Because it is a valued social rite, most girls are willing to succumb to the pain and the subsequent health problems. But whether they wish to be excised or not, the choice is not theirs. Living in a staunchly patriarchal world, they are dependent on men for social and economic survival. As a father from the Ivory Coast told the New York Times, "If your daughter has not been excised. . . . No man in the village will marry her. It is an obligation. We have done it, we do it, and we will continue to do it. . . . She has no choice. I decide. Her viewpoint is not important."

We can see from the phrase "they are dependent on men for social and economic survival" that it is the relations of production in these rural villages that perpetrate this barbaric custom. The law of combined and uneven development as outlined by Trotsky finds its expression in this terrible area. It is part of the bride price custom as is in Afghanistan and all over the African/South Asian region.

It regards the woman as the private property of her father (and men in general) to be sold to her new husband. It is bound up with all those local customs and tribal laws that sustain the local economy and which grow ever more bitter and demanding as capital penetrates every aspect of life. Here the growing of food for family consumption, the subsistence economy, is continually replaced by growing cash crops for export to redress 'balance of payment deficits' imposed by the IMF and the WTO in the first place.

A great number of nominally sovereign states have no real autonomy or effective sovereignty in their economic relations with the world market. These semi-colonies, beginning with India, pursued a version of the Soviet planned economy after WWII, with import substitution and subsidies to native industries because they were conscious that reliance on primary produce left them vulnerable to the world market where the price of primary produce was relative inelastic. That is the metropolitan consumers would only drink so much tea and coffee, and require so much clothing and footwear no matter how cheap. And overproduction inevitable led to a drop in the price.

The infant industries in these countries needed tariff barriers in the beginning to compete on the world market. The IMF allowed the Asian tigers to do that as a bulwark against communism, but the rest of the world, Latin America, Africa and South Asia faced a few major huge crises like 1973. World crisis in the international economy and the huge hike in oil prices had severe consequences for the semi-colonial

world. Many became effectively bankrupt and world Imperialism bailed them out with their brutal structural adjustment programmes which destroyed for a generation their ability to plan anything in their own economy and left them at the mercy of the free market wolves.

The triumph of neo-liberalism with the fall of the USSR in 1991 opened the door for the present sub-prime crises, now engulfing the whole world. Women bear the brunt of this crisis, and female genital mutilation is the village expression of how the patriarchal society survive economically. The combination of economic liberation of a global socialist revolution and then the ideological methods of struggle of the early Bolsheviks is how to combat this, not the bogus, 'rights' campaigns of the UN which brings increasing oppressions in its wake.

Conclusion, Goldman Sachs' "10,000 Women"

Goldman Sachs have a "10,000 Women" programme to educate and promote this number of women to be entrepreneurs in Africa. "Female education is a driver of macroeconomic growth" in Uganda they tell us while they rip the heart and soul out of Africa economically. And they, and their transnational corporation comrades, reap the lion's share of the profits from Africa and South Asia.

According as every part of the globe is drawn into the vortex of the finance capital's neo-liberal nightmare the contradictions like women's oppression, famine and extreme impoverishment grow ever worse. The World Health Organization estimates it will take a minimum of ten years to reduce the prevalence of genital mutilation, and three generations to eradicate it. They make similar projections about clean water, disease and poverty in general. These projections are lies and distortions, global capitalism can only promise wealth and a future to their own 'entrepreneurs' like,

"Rosalie Mukangenzi, the owner of a successful flour mill... With a micro-loan, she started a charcoal business, but in 2008, she moved into milling flour since she thought it could be more profitable. Before the 10,000 Women program, she had only felt comfortable taking small loans, but after graduating, she had the skills and confidence to take on more debt to expand her business. She opened a retail store, hired more employees (when I visited her in 2010, she employed fourteen men and three women), and increased her sales four-fold. She has built a new home for her family, which she plans on using as collateral for her next loan application.

"My dream is to own a big factory, one which can impact the social and economic development of Rwanda," she told me. Of course, many successful entrepreneurs flourish without formal business training, but Rosalie and thousands of other women around the world have bigger ambitions, and more skills to meet them, thanks to 10,000 Women."

These are pipe dreams, obscene versions of the American dream for the billions in the semi-colonial world. It will never happen as long as these material conditions prevail. World Imperialism, whose agents the UN and the WHO are, will never organise its overthrow, that task belongs to the revolutionary workers organisations, the Fourth International when it is reconstructed. That is the prime task we must all set ourselves on this International Women's Day, 8 March 2012.

Endnotes

- [1] TRUSTLAW POLL- Afghanistan is most dangerous country for women, <http://www.trust.org/trustlaw/news/trustlaw-poll-afghanistan-is-most-dangerous-country-for-women>
- [2] Tamale, Sylvia. African Sexualities: A Reader. Fahamu/Pambazuka, 2011, pp. 19–20, 78, 89–90.
- [3] Refers to the academic movement linked to

Pax Romana - the international federation of Catholic intellectuals, one of the oldest international lay Catholic movements. It was created in two stages: in 1921 IMCS/MIEC (the student movement) and 1947 ICMICA/MIIC (academic movement) as a response of Catholic university lecturers and students to the need to build a peaceful world after experience of two world wars. Its name, which refers to the peace existing in the days of Christ, this movement has received in 1921 from Pope Benedict XV.

[4] Introduction to Killing Hope, http://www.thirdworldtraveler.com/Blum/KHIntroNew_uned_WBlum.html

[5] This section is taken from Gerry Downing's 1997 Document Afghanistan, Marxist method vs. Bureaucratic method, <http://www.scribd.com/doc/67406622/Afghanistan-Marxist-Method-vs-Bureaucratic-method-By-Gerry-Downing-1997>

Obituaries

Dave Spencer 1941 - 2012

Dave died on 24 April aged 71. He was a member or in the milieu of almost every far left group in Britain, from Gerry Healy's SLL to Tony Cliff's IS/SWP, Ted Grant's Militant, Alan Thornett's ISG and The Socialist Alliance. He correctly identified the gross sectarianism and opportunism of each in turn and always sought to further the struggles of the working class for socialism with a consciousness that the revolutionary leadership it forged was key. Never a leader himself in that sense his exasperation with thrown back head and rolled eyes when he encountered another unprincipled manoeuvre was a trade mark. Dave was a principled socialist and I never knew him to do an unprincipled act in the time that I knew him and never heard others condemning him for political opportunism. I knew Dave through participating in the CPGB's Campaign for a Marxist Party, my first endeavour following resumption of serious political activity in 2006. We formed the Trotskyist Tendency with the Democratic Socialist Alliance. It was a fraught group, with internal debates on Imperialism and many other things. Tensions were great over an incident between John Pearson and a CPGB comrade, which the CPGB used to close down the CMP in 2008. Condolences to his family.

Gerry Downing

Gerry Foley, Socialist and Republican: 1939 – 2012 April 23, 2012

Gerry was a founding member of Socialist Action, a fulltime revolutionary for our party for some 20-plus years. Before that he was a fulltimer for The Fourth International, magazine International Viewpoint. And before that a fulltimer for the SWP since his twenties. Gerry was 72 or 73 years old and perhaps our most dedicated, talented and gifted revolutionary.

He was perhaps the world's most informed

person on Irish history. Tears often came to his eyes when the subject came up during his innumerable talks on virtually any subject he was assigned to. Lessons from the Irish struggle for self-determination, the longest in world history, more than 700 years and still uncompleted, found their way into so many of Gerry's talks and writing. No comrade that I ever met or knew of could match Gerry's deep understanding of the national question. Comrades who knew Gerry will immediately know that this is no exaggeration. He was a champion of all oppressed peoples and despised their oppressors with great passion.

Gerry's contribution to the revolutionary socialist movement will endure through the generations. His works have been published across the world. His spirit and dedication lives in our party and comrades. Gerry remained an honorary member of our Political Committee to the end, finding the time once in a while to join our deliberations and take an occasional assignment. He hoped to attend our August National convention

Jeff Mackler

Ron Spurway, Trotskyist

Ron Spurway died in October 2011 and was cremated in Hereford to the sound of the International. An outstanding event in his political life was during his period as a Labour councillor in Harrow. The council debated the proposition to award "Freedom of the borough" to Winston Churchill. He angered all the other councillors by opposing the proposition (and explaining why). Unsurprisingly he was not reselected.

Ronald Lynn

Note by Gerry Downing: Ron Spurway seems to have been in Gerry Healy's group. The only publication record I can find of him is a 1960 document *Defend Clause 4* Published by Councillor Ron Spurway, Harrow Weald, Middlesex in the Warwick University Library modern records centre. It is amongst items from Plough Press and Healy's Ceylon, the Great Betrayal, etc. I believe he was on Croydon Trades Union Council in later years.

How Des Warren, and only Des Warren, wrote *The key to my cell* By Chris Corrigan

Introduction by Gerry Downing, ex-WRP member and Secretary of Grass Roots Left, in a personal capacity:

The ideals fought for by Des Warren and his comrades in the 1972 building workers strike and after need to be clearly restated. By far the best way to honour the memory of those who were surely amongst the foremost class warriors of the last century is not simply to legally 'clear the names' of the falsely criminalised and jailed Shrewsbury Pickets but to organise to finish the fight against the "lump" which led them into sharp conflict not only with the building employers and Tory government of the day but also with the UCATT bureaucracy, the TUC cowards and their apologists, chiefly the CPGB and the Morning Star. Des (a CP member then) is very clear in his book that it was it was these latter three who held the key to his cell (and the Labour government after 1974) which they refused to turn to maintain their rotten corrupt class compromise positions of defending capitalism as the source of their privilege.

Following divisions in the Justice for the Shrewsbury Pickets Campaign allies of these have attempted to undermine the authenticity of Des's book. Rumours has been spread via Morning Star channels amongst others that the book was not really Des's work at all or that he was 'spoon-fed' the book by the Workers Revolutionary Party, which organisation he joined after he was released from jail. Chris Corrigan, who assisted Des in the production of the book, sets the record straight.

reporter. Needless to say, you require very high skills in shorthand for such tasks, in terms of accuracy and speed. In fact, I still have my Pitman's shorthand certificates from the 1960s.

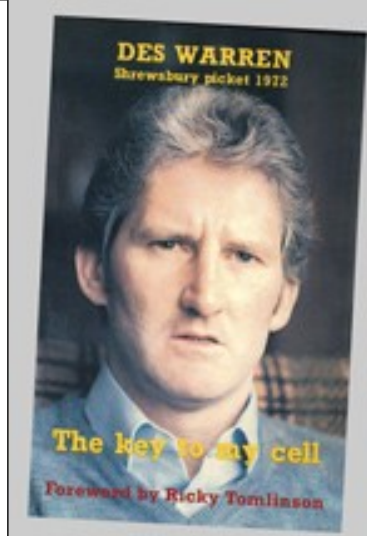
It was these shorthand skills that led to me to cover the appeal court case in the Strand, where Des and Ricky Tomlinson were seeking to overturn their Shrewsbury convictions. I got talking to Des during the many lunch breaks and adjournments - they were temporarily out on bail - and liked him enormously.

Any trade unionist would - he was an extremely impressive man with very high principles which he powerfully expressed. No wonder employers did not like him.

By this time I resigned from the PA, which was increasingly departing from its traditional role as an impartial national news agency and joining in the general rightwing media campaign: e.g., against the early-70s miners' strikes and vilifying so-called dossing, card-playing, night-shift workers at Cowley and Longbridge. I worked freelance, and contributed news stories to various papers as well as, when possible, to the Workers Press, the WRP's paper. I eventually joined the WRP in early 1975, when the Americans had to leave Saigon in a hurry.

I also got to know Des's family, including Elsa, who worked tirelessly, speaking for the Shrewsbury campaign to free Des and his fellow defendants. As is known, their appeal was rejected.

After Des's eventual release from jail, I kept in touch. He was anxious to bring out a book about his experiences. I offered to put my shorthand skills at his disposal - it must be emphasised he was unable to hold a pen still for even a second, or use a typewriter, because of his continuous shakes from the onset of Parkinson's disease brought on by prison authorities



administering Largactil and other heavy tranquilisers. (Largactil was later superseded by drugs which did not cause the same level of side-effects, which continual large doses often brought about.)

So Des needed help to write his book. When he was ready, and when I was available, I spent six weeks with him, sometimes staying at his house in Buckley, North Wales, or travelling by moped each day from Run-corn.

It went like this. Des spoke - I recorded what he said. Each night I would trans-

scribe my shorthand notes onto printed sheets. These proofs would be checked by Des. We eventually had a full manuscript. After about a fortnight, I returned and Des had gone through the manuscript and made additions and changes during the next two weeks. He was ill, but his mind was still sharp, as was his memory, and he had full control of the content - every sentence of it. Nobody else except Des contributed to, or had any control, over its content. He wrote it - even the title, The key to my cell.

My role was as shorthand writer and secretary, and also as a researcher when dates and times needed checking or court transcripts and newspaper cuttings needed finding. All of which Des collated and chose where to insert in the book.

Finally, if anyone wants to challenge the integrity of the above account they can face the consequences or I am willing to meet them to sensibly discuss it. This includes Mr Terry Renshaw - if he is able to absent himself from his work as a highly active member of the North Wales Police Authority, which, in a previous form, helped put Des, Ricky and others behind bars in the first place.

To order copies of the book contact
justice4pickets@yahoo.co.uk

I am a life member of the NUJ and have been a journalist for 48 years. For the past three I have been a contract sub-editor at The Guardian newspaper. Prior to that I was a staff sub-editor at The Independent for 22 years.

Previously I was a news reporter on the Western Mail, then the Birmingham Post, and then, from 1969 to 1974, in Fleet Street with the Press Association news agency, where I was a high court and central criminal court/Old Bailey

New reprint by the Liga Comunista de Brazil: The Historical method of Karl Marx by Paul Lafargue (1903).

In the preface of the book we wrote thus: "The historical method of Karl Marx" is a Lafargue text first translated into Portuguese. It is a polemic against bourgeois conceptions of justice, kindness, soul and God and also

against the prejudices of the "socialist" and anarchists. A controversy in which Lafargue argues scientific socialism and materialist method, historical and dialectical of Marx. Soon his introduction Lafargue fencing with clarity and simplicity:

"For nearly half a century, Marx proposed a new method of interpreting history, which he and Engels applied in their studies. It is

standable that historians, sociologists and philosophers, fearing the communist thinker 'corrupt their consciences', causing them to lose the favours he received from the bourgeoisie, solve ignore it. But it is strange that some socialists hesitate to use such a method, for fear of possibly reach conclusions that compromise their bourgeois ideas, for which they are prisoners of ignorance."



The Press of the Socialist Fight Group and the Liaison Committee for the Fourth International

Leon Trotsky: I am confident of the victory of the Fourth International; Go Forward!